HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL

MEMOIRS

OF THE

1487. g. 12

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

M. DE VOLTAIRE:

INTERSPERSED WITH NUMEROUS

ANECDOTES, POETICAL PIECES, EPIGRAMS and BON MOTS, little known, and never before publiſhed in Engliſh, relative to the LITERATI of France.

PARTICULARLY

THE LIFE OF THE CELEBRATED

J. B. ROUSSEAU,

AS WRITTEN BY VOLTAIRE;

AND THE HISTORY OF THE FAMOUS LIBELLOUS COUPLETS.

FROM THE FRENCH OF

DOM CHAUDON.

DUBLIN:

Printed for L. WHITE, P. WOGAN, P. BYRNE, J. CASH, W. M'KENZIE, J. MOORE and J. JONES.

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JAN

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE effect of great literary reputation is ſuch that the world is better pleaſed with anecdotes, concerning eminent writers, than the exploits of warriors, whoſe fame has been acquired in diſtant countries. The ſlighteſt remains, in verſe or proſe, which relate to the life of M. de Voltaire, or the hiſtory of his works, are, at preſent, much more ſought for than the heroic deeds of Zingis-Khan. This conſideration has induced us to publiſh the following Memoirs: they have been collected by three men of letters, all well informed, who make no pretenſions, except to truth and ſimplicity; and who relate the good and ill they know with equal candor.

M. de Voltaire is ſometimes judged, in the following work, with rigid equity. Some traits of his character and conduct are examined, which are not ſo indifferent to the public as might, at firſt, be imagined. Hav-

ing had the moſt powerful influence, over the opinions of the age in which he lived, it may, perhaps, be eſſentially neceſſary to know whether ſome of the opinions he publiſhed, relative to religion, and its advocates, did not originate in pettiſhneſs, reſentment, or a deſire to dogmatize. The following Memoirs may lead to the ſolution of this queſtion; and authors more capable may, hereafter, finiſh what we have begun.

Many of the moſt diſtinguiſhed men of letters were, likewiſe, attacked by him; and treated with ſeverity, bordering on injuſtice. The graces of his imagination, and the vivacity of his wit, intereſted even thoſe in his behalf who ought to have been the firſt defenders of the perſons he aſſaulted. Whether he was right, or wrong, will beſt be ſeen by reading the facts, for and againſt. We have inſerted ſome pieces, of this kind, by Voltaire, which were unknown, and which are written with that elegant perſpicuity, that agreeable and poignant manner which ſo particularly ſtamp the works of M. de Voltaire.

A long

A long preface were ſuperfluous, at the head of a work of which ſo extraordinary a man is the ſubject: his name, alone, is a recommendation, to the curious reader, and the impartiality of the following anecdotes will enſure the approbation of the equitable.

That which Voltaire himſelf ſaid of Corneille has been remembered as a rule—— "What good ſhould I do him by flattery; "what ill by ſincerity? Truth is preferable "to Corneille; and we ought not to de- "ceive the living out of reſpect to the "dead."

Thus far the French writer ſpeaks for himſelf; the tranſlator will juſt add a few words. It ought to be remembered that the author, or, as he modeſtly calls himſelf, editor of the following Memoirs, is a monk; and though, perhaps, more free from prejudice and partiality than we have reaſon to expect, in a character of that deſcription, yet not wholly ſo, in what concerns religion. His relation of M. de Voltaire's laſt illneſs, recan-

recantation and death, may properly be called the Prieſt's relation. The men of letters, moſt intimate with Voltaire, and who were continually preſent with him, during his ſickneſs, give a very different account. In fact, there ſeems to have been a kind of combat, between the prieſts and the philoſophers, for the ſoul of M. de Voltaire. Every ſtratagem was uſed, by the former, to bring him to a recantation, and make him abjure thoſe doctrines and writings, at his death, by which they had been ſo repeatedly attacked and ridiculed, during his life. The philoſophers, on their part, wanted to outwit the prieſts, and have M. de Voltaire enjoy all the ceremonials they thought his due, rather, perhaps, as a citizen than a chriſtian, in the church's deſpite. The artifices employed by both parties redound not much to the credit of either; and certainly contributed to embitter the laſt moments of M. de Voltaire. The philoſophers ought to have had more philoſophy, the chriſtians more chriſtianity; that is to ſay, more charity and leſs rancour. That M. de Voltaire went out of the world reluctantly there is little reaſon to doubt.

Every

Every circumſtance of his life informs us that, as his genius was great, ſo, his vanity was unbounded; and this had been ſo abundantly fed, during the ſhort time he lived, after his laſt return to Paris, that his reluctance to quit the delicious banquet inſpired, at certain moments, not only repining and grief, but even paſſion and extravagance.

No man, during his life, had, at different times, been ſo much or ſo little a philoſopher; and could any inſtance have proved the opinion that man is compoſed of two natures, a good and an evil, it would have been M. de Voltaire.

With reſpect to his burial in conſecrated ground, and the diſputes concerning it, we ſhall only add, they were equally unworthy philoſophy and chriſtianity.

The ſame farce was again repeated, at the death of M. d'Alembert; though, the object not being of equal magnitude, the diſputants were not equally obſtinate and enraged.

Curioſity

Curioſity has been ſo eager, and unremitting, in its reſearches, concerning M. de Voltaire, that to find no repetition, whatever, of anecdotes before made public, in a work which approaches more the form of a regular life, though it aſſumes the modeſt title of Memoirs, than any hitherto publiſhed, can neither be expected nor hoped. But that many facts little known, poetical pieces, repartees, and epigrams, now firſt collected, will be found here, and that theſe Memoirs contain materials to furniſh the reader with a full and compleat portrait of the man, may, without preſumption, be aſſerted.

HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL

MEMOIRS, &c.

FRANÇOIS MARIE AROUET DE VOLTAIRE, member of the French academy, and of almoſt all the academies in Europe, was born at Paris, November 20, 1694. His family appertained to the long robe, and his father, at firſt notary to the *Chatelet*, and afterwards treaſurer to the *Chambre des Comptes*, at Paris, was equally reſpectable for his learning and his office. His houſe was the rendezvous of the literati. Madame Arouet (Marie-Marguerite d'Aumart of a family of diſtinction) added to her perſonal charms an excellent underſtanding: ſhe was every way deſerving her huſband, and worthy to be the mother of the greateſt poet of his age.

At

At the birth of M. de Voltaire, though he afterwards attained to the age of 84, his life was deſpaired of, and having received half baptiſm, the completion of the ceremony was put off for ſeveral months.

Apollo appears to have preſided over the infancy of M. de Voltaire. He ſtammered verſes almoſt as ſoon as he could ſpeak; that is, at ſix years old. Others have rhimed from inclination and labor, he was a poet in ſpite of himſelf.

He was very early ſent as a boarder to the college of Louis le Grand, where he began his literary career with uncommon ſplendor. He gained almoſt all the prizes, and wrote with equal facility in verſe and proſe. The two profeſſors of rhetoric, were Father le Jai, author of a dull compilation for the uſe of Colleges, and Father Porée, well known for his abilities in rendering learning and virtue amiable. Theſe two, during the ſeven years he was under their tuition, beſtowed much pains to inſpire him with reſpect for the ſublime truths of religion, but without ſucceſs. Young Arouet began, at the age of twelve, to advance thoſe principles and indulge in thoſe ſarcaſms with which ſo many of his works have ſince abounded; and it is a fact, that Father le Jai, even then, predicted, he would become the ſtandard bearer of infidelity.

What

What gave theſe Jeſuits the greateſt uneaſineſs, concerning the ſentiments ſo early ſhewn by M. de Voltaire, ſeems to have been, that they were thereby deprived of the hopes of his joining their ſociety; which, it is well known, endeavored to attach to itſelf every ſcholar of promiſing talents, and thoſe of M. de Voltaire appeared to be of the firſt order; but he diſregarded all their careſſes, and diſappointed all their ſchemes, by his open avowal of his principles.

The character of Father Porée, a man of a mild and inſinuating diſpoſition, was much more agreeable to young Arouet than that of Father Le Jai, who was a mere pedant without any knowledge of the world. With the former he maintained an intimacy as long as he lived, and there remain ſeveral letters to that Jeſuit, which prove he always carefully cultivated his friendſhip; and though ſince his death he has introduced him in the *Confeſſion of Father Berthier*, this is a ſally of imagination which may be forgiven a wit. Beſides, a Frenchman does not always deſpiſe thoſe whom he ridicules, and no man was more a Frenchman than M. de Voltaire.

This talent of raillery he began to diſplay very early, for while he was exceedingly young, a cook maid of his father's, who was mother to the journeyman cobler that had been ſuborned by Rouſ-

ſeau

ſeau in his lawſuit againſt Saurin, being greatly afraid her ſon would be hanged, diſturbed the whole family with her lamentations. 'Do not terrify yourſelf, good woman, ſaid young Voltaire, there is nothing to fear: Rouſſeau, the ſon of a ſhoemaker, ſuborns a cobler, who has, you ſay, a ſhoe-black for his accomplice: never fear, you will not be dirtied higher than the ancle."*

Arouet was ſcarcely twelve years of age when an old invalid came to requeſt the Regent of the college of Louis le Grand, to compoſe him a placet in verſe for the Dauphin: the Regent referred him to his ſcholar, who produced the following verſes: †

Offspring of the moſt puiſſant of monarchs,
His delight and our hope, who, tho' not yet
A king, art ſov'reign o'er thy people's hearts;
Permit my feeble, but ambitious hand,
An off'ring to preſent, tho' this the due
And privilege of deities alone.
Her choiceſt gifts Nature thy birth bequeath'd,
And mark'd thee worthy of thy high deſcent.

* *Tout cela ne paſſera pas le cheville du pied.* A French Proverb.

† M. de Voltaire has given theſe verſes in his *hiſtorical Commentary*, but with ſeveral alterations and corrections. We thought it might not be diſagreeable to the reader to ſee the firſt eſſay of the young poet, rather than the copy corrected by the ripened judgment.

Each

Each god was anxious ſomething to beſtow;
Mars ſent thee ſtrength and valor, Pallas impreſs'd
Even on youthful fire, the wiſdom of age.
Beauty was Apollo's gift; but a god
More mighty, whom in trouble I implore,
Beſtow'd ſomewhat on me when he beſtow'd
A liberal feeling heart upon my Prince.

This poetical trifle gained the old ſoldier twenty guineas.

While he was at college he wrote the following lines on the death of Nero, who killed himſelf:

Execrable accomplice of a mother's death,
By my own hand to fall is what I merit.
Cruelties alone have I yet committed,
Thus let me at laſt do an act of juſtice.

Young Arouet had alſo ſome talents for Latin poetry, and has written verſes in that language ſince he left college. The following, which expreſs all the properties of fire in a few words, are among his beſt.

Ignis ubiquè latet; naturam amplectitur omnem,
Cuncta parit, renovat, dividit, urit, alit *.

* Fire lies hid every where, it penetrates all nature, it produces, renovates, divides, burns, and nouriſhes all things.

The

The Abbé de Chateauneuf, brother to the ambaſſador at the Hague, was godfather to young Arouet, and the confidential friend of his mother. He was very fond of his Godſon, and endeavored all in his power to promote his intereſt. This Abbé was extremely intimate with Mademoiſelle de l'Enclos, whoſe houſe was a kind of hotel de Rambouillet, the reſort of wit and philoſophy. Thoſe mothers who wiſhed to have their ſons introduced to the world with advantage, ſent them to that School; and ſhe who would have led them into error in her youth, took a pleaſure in her old age to form them for ſociety.

Young Arouet, who was then but twelve years old, made verſes much ſuperior to what could have been expected from his age. Mademoiſelle de l'Enclos wiſhed to ſee him, and the Abbé de Chateauneuf, who managed her domeſtic affairs, introduced the young poet to that celebrated lady. Mademoiſelle de l'Enclos was extremely pleaſed with him, and making her will a ſhort time afterwards, ſhe bequeathed him a legacy of 2000 livres (83l. ſterling) to buy books. She died very ſoon after. It has been ſaid that Mademoiſelle de l'Enclos preſerved her beauty to the age of eighty. M. de Voltaire, who had ſeen her in the latter part of her life, ſays, in his *Defence of my Uncle*, that ſhe was dried up like a mummy.

"She

" She was, adds he, a wrinkled ſkeleton, with a yellow or almoſt black ſkin covering her bones." Much has been written on this celebrated courtiſan, of which more is falſe than true. It is pretended that ſhe never ſacrificed to pleaſure for intereſt, but was always determined by her affections; but as thoſe affections ſo frequently changed their object, ſhe was ſoon conſidered among the French as *Lais* or *Phryne* were among the Greeks. Some pious ladies once propoſed to the Queen-Mother to ſhut her up in the convent of the Repentant Maidens, *(Filles-repenties)* but ſhe replied, that would be highly improper, as ſhe was neither the one nor the other. Though her Life has been written in form, it contains no remarkable events. Many lovers, a few friends, a ſedentary life, and ſome agreeable entertainments, compoſe the whole hiſtory of this benefactreſs to M. de Voltaire.

Our poet, having conceived a violent paſſion for the belles lettres, refuſed to concur with the deſigns of his parents, who had intended him for the bar. Having been ſent by his father to ſtudy the law, he was ſo diſguſted at the manner in which juriſprudence was taught, that he conceived an unconquerable averſion to that ſcience; he early renounced all his proſpects of advancement in that profeſſion, to devote himſelf entirely to the ſtudy of literature and mankind. But as it is

neceſſary

neceſſary to have ſome occupation, he attached himſelf to the Marquis de Chateauneuf, who, going to the Hague in 1713, took him with him in quality of page.

There was then in that town a woman whoſe adventures had rendered her famous. This was Madame du Noyer, known by five or ſix volumes of prolix and ſatirical letters. This lady was of a good family at Niſmes, and born a proteſtant. She had been obliged to embrace the catholic faith on her marriage with M. du Noyer. Ten years after ſhe left her huſband, and, taking her two daughters with her, went to profeſs that religion, in Holland, the errors of which ſhe had never abjured in her heart.

The youngeſt of her daughters, named *Pimpette*, poſſeſſed conſiderable vivacity and ſome charms. M. de Voltaire ſaw and loved her. He immediately conceived the project of ſtealing her from her mother and bringing her to Paris. This intrigue could not remain long concealed. It was neceſſary to take meaſures to hide it from the public, and above all from M. de Chateauneuf, to whom Madame du Noyer had made her complaint. M. de Voltaire was kept priſoner at the ambaſſador's hotel, where his miſtreſs came to ſee him diſguiſed in man's cloaths. It was, ſaid he (in ſome verſes made on the occaſion) Venus diſguiſed in

the

the perſon of Love. But Madame du Noyer and M. de Chateauneuf ſaw not this adventure with the ſame eyes. The young man was ſent back to Paris to his father, who would not ſee him, and obtained a *Lettre de Cachet* for his confinement. "I dare not ſhew myſelf, (ſays he in one of his letters) I have cauſed interceſſion to be made to my father; all I can obtain from him, is, that I muſt embark for the Colonies, and he will furniſh me with bread and water, but nothing can prevail on him to change his reſolution with regard to a will he has made, by which I am diſinherited." To appeaſe him a little he went to board with a lawyer, in order to qualify himſelf for that profeſſion to which he had been firſt deſtined.

All theſe particulars are to be found in the letters of M. de Voltaire to Mademoiſelle du Noyer, which her mother intercepted, and cauſed to be printed with her own. This proceeding, not very delicate, was the cauſe of much uneaſineſs, at the time, to M. de Voltaire, and he never admitted theſe love letters into any collection of his works. In this he was right, for they are certainly juvenile, or, as ſome would ſay, puerile productions. They no where exhibit the pathetic and moving language of Zara and Alzira. The ſtyle is ſimple, and even bordering on frigidity. The lover appears to have been inſpired with

but a languid paſſion. As to his miſtreſs, a fortunate marriage enabled her to lead a much happier life than ſhe could have done in a foreign country, along with a mother of ſo ſingular a character and diſagreeable a temper. The connexion between the two lovers terminated in a laſting eſteem and friendſhip, of which M. de Voltaire gave many proofs to Mademoiſelle du Noyer, after ſhe became Madame Winterfield. His enemies, in relating this adventure, have ſtrangely miſrepreſented it. M. de la Beaumelle ſays, in his Notes on the Age of Louis XIV. that *Cavalier*, the chief of the inſurgents among the Cevennes, was the rival of M. de Voltaire; "and, as might be expected, adds he, the hero bore away the prize from the poet, and a mild and agreeable ſet of features was preferred to a wild and malicious phyſiognomy."

All this is extremely falſe. Cavalier, being a Colonel in the Engliſh ſervice, in 1708, went into the Low Countries, where he ſaw Mademoiſelle du Noyer, then very young and handſome. He ſolicited her in marriage, but the negociation being broken off, he afterwards married in Ireland. M. de Voltaire was then at college, and did not go to Holland till 1713; nor did he become acquainted with Cavalier till 1726. And, indeed, if the anecdote related by M. de

de la Beaumelle had been true, it was very improper to introduce it into a work of Voltaire's. It is like inſulting a man in his own houſe. As to what is ſaid of his perſon, it is not true that he was ſo diſagreeable as he is deſcribed by M. de la Beaumelle. M. de Voltaire, when young, though not abſolutely handſome, had a very engaging countenance. The loſs of his teeth, the marks of the ſmall-pox, the ſcurvy, and other diſorders, ariſing from his great application, had afterwards conſiderably altered his features. But he always took care to conceal the decays of age, by the moſt careful cleanlineſs. Even in his youth he paid the greateſt attention to his health. "Let me beg you (ſays he in a letter to the Marchioneſs de Mimeure) to ſend me the little plaiſter you promiſed me for the pimple which is come above my eye. Do not imagine this is foppery, my eyes begin to be of no further importance to me, but as they ſerve me to read with. Indeed, I no longer fear the eyes of any perſon."

In 1714, M. de Voltaire, diſguſted with the law, again proſecuted his poetical ſtudies. He compoſed an ode for the prize given by the French academy, but ſaw it adjudged to a writer much his inferior. This was the Abbé du Jarry; the public, however, never ſubſcribed to the judgment of the academy.

The poem which obtained the prize was below mediocrity, and at the ſame time was rendered more contemptible by an abſurdity which argued the moſt profound ignorance. In it was the following line :

" E'en from the frozen to the burning poles."

M. de la Motte, a man of an amiable character and conſiderable wit, had, by his credit and influence, obtained the prize for the Abbé du Jarry. When his deciſion was criticiſed, and the verſe about the burning poles ridiculed, he anſwered, that it was a matter in natural philoſophy, and belonged to the department of the academy of ſciences, and not to that of the French academy; that, beſides, he was not certain but there might be a burning pole, and, moreover, that the Abbé du Jarry was his friend.

The antagoniſt of M. de Voltaire, and likewiſe the judges, were much burleſqued at the time, eſpecially by the diſappointed candidate; and as ſuch opportunities for wit are rarely afforded, he returned ſeveral times to the charge.

The following is an epigram he wrote on this occaſion :

La Motte, preſiding o'er the laurel,
For which your wits ſo often quarrel,
Worthy of *civic* crowns proclaims
The conquerors at *olympic* games :

The

The prize he held, but how beſtow it?
This blind Agonothet * miſtook
The blooming olive for an oak,
And poor du Jarry for a poet.

Voltaire has not printed his ode among his works, though he has preſerved ſeveral that are perhaps inferior to theſe his earlieſt productions. We ſhall only cite from it the following verſes:

Th' expreſs images of the gods they ought
To honor, kings are; but, tho' all pay homage,
Too few are they who worthily adore:
Their proud offerings, and pompous piety,
Are often horrible in heav'n's ſight.
And, even on th' altar their pride prepares,
We ſee th' avenging angel trace their ſentence.
Happy the king whoſe ſplendid crown his eye
Not dazzles, nor his upright heart inflates.
Who temples to th' omnipotent erects,
Daring, amid his dignity, be humble,
Seeking Juſtice, Hypocriſy confounding,
And giving to Miſfortune an aſylum.
To monarchs then a glorious example.

As to the rival of young Arouet, the Abbé du Jarry, he corrected his miſtake of the frozen and the burning poles, by ſubſtituting the word

* Agonothetes the preſident and judge of games among the Greeks.

climates,

climates, which was more proper though leſs poetical. But how many times has propriety been ſacrificed to harmony! This Abbé, though a very indifferent poet, has written ſome good verſes, at leaſt ſuch as have a happineſs of thought. Such are thoſe where he ſays, he will retire from the world, before the world retires from him:

> Entombed, as 'twere, I wait declining light,
> And but anticipate eternal night.

The Abbé du Jarry had obtained the prize of the French academy twice before, once in 1679, and again in 1683. A number of perſons of very moderate, or even inferior abilities, might be mentioned, who have attained to this diſtinction; with which Voltaire, and even Jean Baptiſte Rouſſeau, were never honored.

Our poet, early diſtinguiſhed as a man of learning and wit, experienced all the obſtacles which ſo frequently attend that character. The moſt ſerious of theſe was his confinement in the Baſtille; the occaſion of which was as follows:

Immediately after the death of Louis XIV. there appeared a little piece imitated from the *J'ai Vu* (I have ſeen) of the Abbé Regnier. In this the author reviewed various things he had ſeen in his life. This poem is as much neglected, at preſent, as it was then ſought after; the conſtant fate

fate of all works which have no merit but that of perſonal ſatire. This fooliſh production had no other. It was only remarkable for its groſs and undeſerved abuſe. This however gave it prodigious popularity. The meanneſs of the ſtyle was pardoned for the malignity of the matter. It concluded thus: *I have ſeen theſe evils ere my twentieth year.*

As M. de Voltaire was then about twenty years old, this was imagined by many a ſufficient proof that he was the author of this wretched performance. They did not even do him the honor to believe he would be prudent enough to conceal himſelf. The real author of this miſerable libel, at the ſame time, did his utmoſt to make it paſs for M. de Voltaire's, that ſo he might himſelf be more effectually concealed. Voltaire's diſgrace was intended and effected. The Regent cauſed him to be confined in the Baſtille, in 1718; either becauſe he attributed to him the *J'ai Vu*, or imagined him to have been concerned in ſome *Philippics*; or elſe had heard of ſome of the young poet's bon-mots; which had for their ſubject the Prince's amours, and the changes in the adminiſtration.

It is reported that M. de Voltaire was in this melancholy manſion when his tragedy of Oedipus was acted, and that the Duke of Orleans, having

having ſeen this piece, was ſo delighted with it, that he ordered its author to be ſet at liberty. M. de Voltaire, it is pretended, directly waited on the Prince to return him thanks, when the Duke bade him for the future be more circumſpect, and he would take care of him. I am infinitely obliged to you, replied M. de Voltaire, but I muſt intreat your Highneſs not to trouble yourſelf any more to provide me with lodging and board. This anecdote is falſe. However, M. de Voltaire having obtained his liberty, was forbidden to appear in Paris for ſome time, and exiled to Sulli-ſur-Loire. At length, tired of continuing in the country, he addreſſed the following verſes to the Counteſs of Thoulouſe, that ſhe might intercede for him to be permitted to return to Paris.

For me, oh! deign to ſupplicate that Prince,
Who, amiable and wiſe, with you ſo late
Dangers and ſtorms ſuſtain'd, and look'd on death:
Him with ſweet ſounds conjure t'avert the ſtorm
That me purſues, and thus perſuaſive ſpeak:
Oh thou whoſe cares our deſtinies have chang'd,
Whoſe benefactions ſignalize thy pow'r,
Who ſmil'ſt beſt pleas'd, when ſmiles humanity;
Oh Prince, there yet remains a wretch in France,
A vagrant ſon of verſe, unfortunate,
Whilom by thee condemn'd to fly thoſe haunts
Embelliſh'd by thy reign.—Yet think that oft

Apollo's fav'rites beſt a Prince's deeds
Eternize: baniſh them, thou but driv'ſt forth
So many heralds to thy own renown;
Auguſtus thus the tender Ovid drove
To Scythian wilds, and, tho' an earthly god
Auguſtus was, in this he was but man;
Bleſt tho' he liv'd, may'ſt thou great Prince now prove
Than he more clement, and than he more happy.

As theſe ingenious verſes are not found in any collection of the works of M. de Voltaire, there is no doubt but they will prove acceptable to the reader.

Soon after the diſgrace of the Baſtille, a perſon of experience in the affairs of the world predicted to M. de Voltaire, what he afterwards found very true. "Young man, ſaid he, continue to write tragedies, and renounce every ſerious occupation; doubt not, however, but you will be perſecuted during your whole life, ſince you are ſo far abandoned by God, as, in a fit of youthful levity, to become a poet."

This connoiſſeur in poetry and men, quoted a hundred examples of the misfortunes which had followed a cultivation of literature and the fine arts. He urged the beſt reaſons poſſible to diſſuade him from his purſuits. But what was the poet's reply? He made verſes to prove he would make no more, and ſoon perceived how vain was the attempt to vanquiſh a ruling paſſion.

M. de

M. de Voltaire had contracted a very intimate friendſhip with the Preſident de Maiſons, and went frequently to his country ſeat to cultivate his acquaintance, and the Belles Lettres. There, in the autumn of 1723, he was attacked by the ſmall-pox. In a letter, at preſent before us, he thus gives the Hiſtory of his diſorder:

" The Preſident de Maiſons and myſelf were " taken ill the 4th of November laſt, but hap- " pily all the danger fell upon me. We were " let blood the ſame day; he ſoon recovered; " but I had the ſmall-pox. This diſorder ap- " peared, after a fever of two days, in a ſlight " eruption, when I was a ſecond time bled by " my own authority, and in defiance of vulgar " prejudice. M. de Maiſons had the goodneſs " to ſend to me the next day M. de Gervaſi, " phyſician to the Cardinal de Rohan, who came " with ſome reluctance. He was fearful he ſhould " be unſucceſsful in attempting the cure of the " ſmall-pox, in ſo weak and delicate a conſtitu- " tion, after the ſecond day of the eruption, " when no preparative had been made uſe of, " except two ſlight bleedings, without any ca- " thartic.

" Nevertheleſs he came, and found me in a " dangerous fever. He had at firſt a very bad " opinion of my diſorder, my ſervants perceived " it,

" it, and ſuffered me not to remain in ignorance.
" I was informed at the ſame time, that the prieſt
" of Maiſons, who was much concerned at my
" illneſs, and not afraid of the ſmall-pox, had
" deſired to know whether he could ſee me,
" without diſturbing me. I ordered him to be
" admitted into my chamber, and immediately
" confeſſed, and made my will, which, as you
" will ſuppoſe, was of no great length.

" After this, I expected death with reſigna-
" tion, though not without regretting that I had
" not yet put the finiſhing hand to my Poem,
" and Mariamne; nor without being a little vexed
" at quitting my friends ſo ſoon. However,
" M. de Gervaſi never left me a moment, and
" remarked with attention every effort of nature,
" never giving me any thing to take without
" aſſigning his reaſon, and at once explaining to
" me my danger, and pointing out the proper
" remedies. His reaſoning convinced, at the ſame
" time that it inſpired confidence.

" Nothing is indeed of ſo much importance
" as that a patient ſhould have confidence in
" his phyſician, as the hopes of being cured
" is frequently half the cure. He was obliged
" to give me an emetic eight ſeveral times,
" and, inſtead of cordials, which are commonly
" given in this diſorder, he made me drink two

" hun-

" hundred pints of Lemonade. This ſeemingly
" extraordinary treatment was the only one which
" could ſave my life, any other would infalli-
" bly have proved my deſtruction. I am well
" perſuaded the greateſt part of thoſe who have
" periſhed by this dreadful diſtemper would
" have been ſtill alive, if they had been treated
" in the ſame manner.

" What gave me the greateſt conſolation, du-
" ring my illneſs, was the concern you expreſſed,
" the ſolicitude of all my friends, and the inex-
" preſſible kindneſs I experienced from Madame
" and M. de Maiſons. I beſides enjoyed the
" ſatisfaction of having with me one of thoſe
" virtuous few who alone know what friendſhip
" is, while the reſt of the world are merely ac-
" quainted with its name. The perſon I mean
" is M. Tiriot, who, from the time he firſt heard
" of my illneſs, never quitted me. By the 15th
" I was quite out of danger, and wrote verſes on
" the 16th, notwithſtanding the extreme weak-
" neſs I ſtill experienced from the diſorder, and
" the remedies I had taken.

" I waited with impatience to have it in my
" power to leave Maiſons, and put an end to
" the trouble I had there occaſioned. The greater
" kindneſs I experienced, the more anxious was
" I not to abuſe ſo much goodneſs, and on the

" 1ſt

" 1ſt of December found myſelf ſufficiently re-
" covered to ſet out for Paris.

" My departure was followed by a dreadful
" accident: Scarcely was I gotten two hundred
" paces from the houſe of M. de Maiſons, when
" a fire broke out in the apartment I had juſt
" quitted, which conſumed ſeveral of the ad-
" joining rooms, and others underneath, with all
" their valuable furniture. The loſs amounted
" to near a hundred thouſand livres (above four
" thouſand pounds) and without the aſſiſtance
" of ſome engines, which were ſent for from
" Paris, one of the fineſt edifices in France
" would have been entirely deſtroyed... The
" news of this ſtrange accident was concealed
" from me on my arrival, but I was informed
" of it in the morning. You cannot imagine
" my diſtreſs. You know with what kindneſs
" I was entertained by M. de Maiſons, who
" treated me with a brotherly affection, and the
" reward of all his goodneſs was the burning a
" part of his houſe.

" I could not conceive how my chamber could
" ſo ſuddenly take fire, as I had only left in it
" a few embers nearly extinguiſhed. I after-
" wards found that the fire had been cauſed by
" a beam which ran exactly under the hearth.
" This impropriety is avoided in the modern

" build-

" buildings, as the frequent accidents that have " happened, from this dangerous method of " building, have produced a law by which it is " forbidden. The beam I have mentioned took " fire by degrees from the heat of the hearth, " which was directly over it, though fortunately " the fire, which had been ſmouldering there " for two days before, did not break out till after " my departure.

" Though not actively, I was paſſively the " unhappy cauſe of this accident, and I felt as " much as if it had happened by my neglect. I " was directly ſeized again by the fever, and can " aſſure you, that, at that moment, I regretted " M. de Gervaſi had preſerved my life.

" Madame and M. de Maiſons received the " news with much leſs concern than I. Their " generoſity was as great as their loſs, or my " grief. M. de Maiſons wrote to me, in a man- " ner which ſhewed his goodneſs and delicacy " were every way equal to his underſtanding. " He indeed took ſo much pains to conſole me, " that it ſeemed as if he had been the occaſion " of burning my houſe; but this greatneſs of " mind only ſerved to increaſe my ſorrow, and " as long as I live my concern for the accident " will equal my admiration of his virtues."

The

The memory of the Preſident de Maiſons was always dear to M. de Voltaire. The place he has given him in his Temple of Taſte proves him at once capable of feeling and celebrating friendſhip.

" Among theſe amiable perſons" (ſays he) " I met the Preſident de Maiſons, a man who " never ſpoke without a meaning, of a character " both amiable and ſolid, who loved and pro- " tected the arts.

Tranſporting pleaſures! moments charg'd with joy!
Dear friend, ſaid I, ſprinkling with tears his much lov'd ſhade,
Thee have I loſt! Thee, hated Death, to pray'rs
And pity deaf, tho' blooming were thy years,
Tore from my trembling arms! Ah! ſurely, ſince
This cruel ſeparation was decreed,
'Twas thine by right to live, and mine to die.
For from the day I firſt beheld the light,
Heav'n gave me Grief for my inheritance;
Whilſt thy career was brilliant, ſtrew'd with flow'rs;
In the boſom of pleaſures, arts, and honors,
Peace was thy culture, Wiſdom was thy child.
Virtue with thee was not th' effect of weakneſs;
Nor didſt thou, with the bandage of example,
Or weak opinion, ever blind-fold Reaſon.
For error man is born, nor is the clay
Beneath the potter's moulding hand more pliant,
Than is the ſoul to erring prejudices apt;
Thoſe ſilly rulers of a ſilly world.

But

But Nature gave thee ſtrength to brave their laws,
Taught thee to taſte the ſweets of gentle friendſhip;
And, to a manly underſtanding, added
The tendereſt, moſt juſt, and beſt of hearts.

M. de Voltaire likewiſe paid his tribute of gratitude to his phyſician. He has addreſſed to him an epiſtle, which contains a liſt of thoſe illuſtrious perſons who were then friends to the author.

By thee and by thy art I ſtill enjoy,
Amidſt my pangs, the pleaſures and the ſweets
Of that ſociety illuſtrious friendſhip yields;
For thus my fates, happy in this, decreed.
Thee, Maiſons, I again behold, whoſe hand,
Benevolent, the bed of ſickneſs ſoften'd;
Thee whoſe wiſdom experience precedes,
Whoſe prudence, in the age of folly, we admire.
What pleaſures, virtuous Sulli, ſhalt thou feel,
When thou behold'ſt me riſing from the tomb!
While I, in ſecret, hope thy gen'rous heart
Its ſuffrage ſhall accord to my laſt labor,
And that my Mariamne's woes may haply
Call forth the pleaſing tear of ſweet compaſſion.
Gardens ſuperb, ye whoſe refreſhing ſhades
Villars owns and honors, under your foliage
Crown'd with glory, give me again the hero,
Who, on the wings of vict'ry, ſent us peace.
There Richelieu alſo, ſoon as he appears,
With grace, hilarity, and wit bewitching,
Mine and all hearts ſhall charm and faſcinate.

And thou, beloved Bolingbroke, Apollo's
Fav'rite; thou, who to Cicero's eloquence
Doſt add Petronian elegance, Mecænian wit,
For thee, once more, I breathe; again to thee
Shall liſten, and again with thee converſe, &c.

M. de Voltaire was one of the firſt men of letters who lived in familiarity with the great. He, like them, maintained ſecretaries, valets-de-chambre, and all thoſe domeſtics proper to give him conſequence in the eyes of the little and of the great vulgar. Haughty among nobles, he never ſuffered a ſlight or inſult to paſs unnoticed. The anſwer he made to the Chevalier de R—, is well remembered. The Chevalier was pleaſed to make merry with the name of Voltaire, which he had aſſumed. The difference, retorted the Poet, between you and me, is, that I am the firſt of my name, and you are the laſt of yours. The Chevalier de R—, piqued at the vivacity of this repartee, treated M. de Voltaire, when he met him at the Duc de Sulli's, with ſome rudeneſs, and that nobleman, not taking the Poet's part with ſufficient warmth, M. de Voltaire took a remarkable revenge: he immediately called in all the copies of the Henriade, which was then only known under the title of the League, a Poem in ſix Cantos, and publiſhed a new edition, in its preſent form, in which he ſubſtituted the name of

Mornay inſtead of that of the Duc de Sulli, which is no longer to be found in the poem.

It was about that time that M. Arouet took the name by which he has been ſince ſo celebrated. During a journey which he made into Italy, ſays Chevrier, he fell ſick at Volterra, a town in Tuſcany, where he was taken care of with ſo much reſpect, that he took the name out of gratitude, and the inhabitants of Volterra ſtill eſteem this circumſtance an honor. This anecdote has not the leaſt foundation. Voltaire never was in Italy. He derived his new name from an eſtate which belonged to his mother. " I have been ſo unfor-" tunate with the other, (ſays he in a letter about " that time) that I intend to ſee if I ſhall have " more ſucceſs with this." It is very ſingular that he has often been upbraided with changing his name, though ſuch a change is always permitted to any perſon, equally rich; and even the moſt inconſiderable Gaſcon may lengthen his by two or three ſyllables, or metamorphoſe it at pleaſure, without any remarks being made.

The confinement of M. de Voltaire in the Baſtille was not prejudicial to his talents. He there compoſed ſeveral works, part of which he retained in his memory, and wrote the reſt on the walls with a coal, or on the lead of the windows with the point of a pin. The Henriade, the idea of which

which had been ſuggeſted to him by M. de Caumartin, an old man full of enthuſiaſm for Henry IV. was written during this year's impriſonment. It at firſt conſiſted of only ſix cantos, of which none remain except the ſecond, that contains the maſſacre of St. Bartholomew. The manner in which his health had ſuffered during his confinement, and the continual infirmities under which he afterwards labored, would not permit him to apply himſelf to perfecting his Henriade but feebly and at long intervals.

In 1723 this poem was publiſhed under the title of the League. This firſt edition was ill digeſted, mutilated, and imperfect. One canto was wanting, and the reſt diſpoſed in an improper order. It was alſo entitled a poem, a kind of work which had never ſucceeded in the French language, and ſeemed to promiſe nothing but an effuſion of dulneſs. Yet ſo dear was the memory of Henry IV. to the French, that this poem was read with indulgence, and even paſſed through more than one edition.

In 1726, being in England, he met with univerſal protection and encouragement, which he could not have hoped for elſewhere. The publication of a French work, written with freedom, was eagerly promoted. King George I. and eſpecially the Princeſs of Wales, afterwards Queen,

obtained for him a numerous ſubſcription. This was the beginning of his good fortune, which from that time continually increaſed.

This generoſity greatly added to the good opinion which Voltaire entertained of the Engliſh nation, and he never failed to extol that people in all his writings. He was however far from meeting with the ſame treatment from his own countrymen; but the Cardinal de Tencin, Ambaſſador from France to Rome, who poſſeſſed as much taſte for literature as abilities for buſineſs, having read ſome paſſages of this work to the Pope, his Holineſs forbade his Nuncio to be concerned in the proſecution of the author.

The Queen of England, to whom the Henriade was at firſt dedicated, received the dedication favorably; and the King ſent the author a preſent of two thouſand crowns, and patronized him and his work: but both were perſecuted at Paris. The envy of his brother authors is ſcarcely to be credited. A thouſand petulant criticiſms appeared againſt it. The Henriade was ridiculed at the theatre, called *La Comedie Italienne*, and alſo at that of the Fair: But all this cabal and malevolence could not prevent the ſucceſs of the Poem. It ran through more than twenty editions, and ſeveral of its cantos were tranſlated into various languages.

M. Nenci,

M. Nenci, of the Academy at Rome, in particular, diſtinguiſhed himſelf by tranſlating the firſt canto into Italian verſe. The copiouſneſs of his language, the liberty of blank verſe, together with the genius and taſte he poſſeſſed in ſo eminent a degree, enabled him to tranſlate this canto with equal elegance and fidelity. The French language, more confined, and incapable of admitting verſe without rhime, has never yet produced a tranſlation in verſe, at once faithful and poetical, of a poem from any language whatever. Every thing of that kind is at beſt but an imitation; on which account the French generally tranſlate into proſe. But it may be ſaid, that poetry tranſlated into proſe is not really tranſlated. The principal idea may be exact, but the acceſſory muſt be wanting. Neither the cadence, the harmony, nor the boldneſs of the expreſſion can be retained. A poetical proſe is but proſe ſtill, and if it departs much from it becomes ridiculous: whence we may conclude, a French tranſlation, either in verſe or proſe, of Homer, Virgil, Horace, Ovid, &c. can never give a juſt idea of thoſe authors, becauſe there is as much difference between a French tranſlation of any of the exquiſite works of antiquity and the works themſelves, as between two modern productions, one of which attains only to mediocrity, while the other is admirably beautiful.

In

In 1736, the King of Pruſſia, then Prince Royal, cauſed an engraved edition of the Henriade, with vignettes at the head of each page, to be begun in London. He even deigned to honor this undertaking with a preface written by himſelf, and this uncommon honor was the moſt valuable recompence the author could receive for all he had ſuffered from the critics of his own country.

" The Poem of the Henriade, in fact, was but " an unfiniſhed work, which, though it contained " many beautiful verſes, was full of inequalities. " M. de Voltaire was ſuperior to the weakneſs of " imagining himſelf perfect. He corrected its " improprieties, and converted its defects into " beauties. This great work will now continue a " ſtriking proof, that docility and continual ap- " plication can alone conduct us to immortality.

" The critics of the Henriade ſeem at firſt to " have refuſed it the name of an epic poem; but " what other name can ſuit a work which exhi- " bits a unity of action, place, time, and in- " tereſt, more than any other work of the ſame " kind? I appeal to every man of taſte in Eu- " rope, whether from the firſt line to the laſt of " the poem, the intereſt does not turn on Henry " the Great.

" The

" The unity of place is obſerved, becauſe Pa-
" ris is always ſuppoſed beſieged, and becauſe
" the commencement of the ſiege, and the en-
" trance of the King into the city, form the ſub-
" ject of the work.

" The unity of time is yet more rigorouſly
" preſerved, ſince the time of the whole action
" is that of a ſingle ſummer.

" The unity of intereſt is evident, ſince our
" whole attention is directed to Henry the Great.

" It cannot therefore be doubted, but all the
" rules are here inviolably obſerved.

" I ſhall not liſten to the objections made to
" M. de Voltaire's not having employed heaven,
" earth, and hell to carry on his action. It
" certainly could not be expected that Jupiter and
" Venus ſhould concern themſelves with the
" affairs of Henry IV. and we ought undoubted-
" ly to applaud the author for not having intro-
" duced magicians, like Taſſo, or angels can-
" nonading each other, like Milton. There
" ſeems to me a ſingular dexterity to be able to
" employ fictions which are neither puerile nor
" extravagant in this enlightened and philoſophi-
" cal Age, when fictions, purely poetical, would
" be regarded as proofs of a falſe taſte.

" But the Henriade will eſpecially delight per-
" ſons of ſenſe, becauſe in it the author has

" written

" written no leſs rationally than poetically. He
" has deſcribed our manners and cuſtoms, and
" it muſt be confeſſed that no epic poet, ex-
" cept Homer, has been able to draw portraits
" which preſerve a reſemblance. We find in
" the Henriade, our manner of fighting, our
" fortifications, our ſieges, our laws, our cuſ-
" toms, and thoſe of our neighbours, and what
" is more than all, characteriſtic portraits of all
" the principal perſons in the time of Henry IV.
" The reader will neceſſarily be charmed to find
" ſo much truth in a ſpecies of compoſition
" where commonly nothing is to be found but
" fiction.

" Some have affected to call Telemachus
" an epic poem, apparently with a view to de-
" prive the Henriade of the glory of being the
" only French work of that ſpecies: but I am
" well perſuaded, M. de Fenelon would not
" have preſumed to have given ſo grand a title
" to his production. Thoſe who ſpeak ſo impro-
" perly, are ſuch as wiſh for the glory of being
" accounted poets, without the labor of writ-
" ing poetry. They boldly aſſert, a long com-
" poſition in verſe can never ſucceed, becauſe
" they know themſelves incapable of producing
" ſuch a one; and I will venture to affirm, that
" nothing but the appearance of the Henriade

" could

" could have convinced the French nation
" it was poſſible for an epic poem to be written
" in their language.

" I am ready to allow, it was the opinion of
" M. de Fenelon, that the French could never
" raiſe themſelves to the ſublimity neceſſary for
" the epopœa; he was unacquainted with the
" powers of our poetry. He was himſelf but a
" very indifferent poet, as is manifeſt from the
" few verſes of his which have been publiſhed.
" He imagined the meaſure of the ode was
" more pleaſing to the ear than our heroic verſe,
" and that this meaſure alone can be ſupported
" without becoming tireſome; but if he had con-
" ſidered that our tragedies are written in Alex-
" andrine verſe of twelve ſyllables, he would
" never have imagined epic poems muſt be com-
" poſed in ſtanzas.

The account here given of the Henriade has occaſioned the following obſervations by M. de M.

Note and letter furniſhed by M. de M.

The apology for the Henriade, as it is above quoted, is taken from a Letter of M. de la Bruére, that is to ſay, of M. de Voltaire, who wrote it under the name of La Bruére, his friend, againſt the Journaliſts of Trevoux. There are

are certainly many beautiful paſſages in the Henriade, but what will infallibly prevent its being ranked with the Eneid, or the Jeruſalem of Taſſo, is, that it contains but little invention, that the perpetual employment of Diſcord, as a meſſenger, renders it extremely frigid; and that the perſonification of the paſſions can produce nothing but langtior in a long poem, unleſs they appear under the name of ſome hero or divinity who may fix the attention of the reader. The author has likewiſe been blamed for his enormous profuſion of antitheſes; his numerous profaic verſes by the ſide of others which are very brilliant; too great a ſameneſs in his characters, &c. and for having ſtifled pathos with deſcription.

The criticiſm of the Journaliſts of Trevoux laid the firſt foundation of Voltaire's enmity to the Jeſuits, though while they continued powerful he made his attacks in ſecret. Of this kind was the following piece againſt Father Caſtel, one of the Journaliſts. It was circulated in manuſcript at the time, and attributed to different authors, but is certainly by Voltaire.

LETTER

LETTER TO M. RAMEAU,

Concerning Father CASTEL and his ocular HARPSICHORD, by M. de VOLTAIRE.

I CONGRATULATE you, M. Rameau, on having made new diſcoveries in your art. After having exhibited ſo many new beauties in it, you have acquired the approbation of the Academy of Sciences, as well as the applauſes of the pit at the Opera Houſe: but, above all, you may boaſt an honor which I think no one ever could before. Other authors are commented on a thouſand years after their death, by ſome wretched and tireſome pedant, but your works have had a commentator even during your life, and one widely different from ſuch as I have juſt mentioned.

This muſt certainly prove your merit, but the Reverend Father Caſtel, fearing you ſhould be too vain of ſo much glory, has, like a good chriſtian, been deſirous to procure you a ſalutary humiliation. So much has he your ſalvation at heart, that, without greatly conſidering the ſtate of the queſtion, he has only thought of humbling you; rather wiſhing your ſanctification than inſtruction.

"*Without reaſon*," was the witty reply of Father Canaye; and this expreſſion "*without reaſon*," has appeared to him ſo ſtriking, he has made it the

the rule of all his actions, and all his compoſitions; nay ſo exceedingly potent is he in this great mode of argument, I am aſtoniſhed how you have eſcaped its force.

You may diſpute againſt us, who are in the contemptible habit of only acknowledging ſelf-evident principles, and ſlowly proceeding from conſequence to conſequence, but how can you combat againſt the Reverend Father Caſtel? This indeed is to battle with Bellerophon. Reflect on your raſh enterprize; you have confined yourſelf to the calculation of ſounds, and to furniſh excellent muſic for our ears; but at preſent you are to engage a man who compoſes muſic for the eyes. He paints minuets and beautiful ſarabands. All the deaf in Paris are invited by him to a concert which he has been preparing for them theſe twelve years, and there is not a dyer who does not promiſe himſelf inexpreſſible pleaſure from the Opera of Colours, which the Reverend Philoſopher intends to repreſent by his ocular harpſichord. Even the blind are invited*. He eſteems them very good judges of colours, and he ought ſo to do, for they judge of them nearly in the ſame manner as he

* Father Caſtel, in his letters to the Preſident de Monteſquieu, ſays, that the blind themſelves may judge of his harpſichord.

does

does of your muſic. He has already introduced weak mortals to theſe ſublime diſcoveries. He prepares us by degrees to underſtand this admirable art. With what goodneſs, with what condeſcenſion towards the human race has he deigned to demonſtrate, in his letters, which are the ornament of the Journal de Trevoux, to demonſtrate, I ſay, by lemmas, theorems and ſcholiums—— 1ſt, That all men love pleaſure. 2d, That painting is a pleaſure. 3d, That yellow is different from red: and a hundred other knotty queſtions of the ſame nature!

You are not to imagine, that, in order to raiſe himſelf to the diſcovery of theſe ſublime truths, he has neglected our ordinary muſic; on the contrary, he wiſhes every one to learn it with facility, and for that purpoſe has given, at the end of his *Univerſal Mathematics*, a ſcheme of all the parts of muſic, divided into one hundred and thirty-four treatiſes, for the benefit of the memory; a diviſion certainly ſuitable to ſo rare a work, in which he has filled three hundred and ſixty pages before he comes to the definition of an angle. That you may learn to reverence your maſter, you, as well as the negligent public, are to be informed, he has compleated a new ſyſtem of Natural Philoſophy; which, like himſelf, is without a parallel. This ſyſtem is contained in two formidable volumes. A bold man of my acquaintance, who has dared

dared to look into thoſe terrible myſteries, has ſhewn me what may appear incredible. We are informed (book 5. chap. 3, 4, 5.) that men are the maintainers of all the motion in the univerſe, and the entire mechaniſm of nature; and that if there were no men, the whole machine would be deranged. He ſhewed me little vortices, and wheels that run one into another, which have a charming effect, and explain the nature of the great ſprings of the world. How prodigious was my admiration when I read (part 2d. page 309.) this beautiful aphoriſm—"God has created nature, and nature has created the world."

He never thinks like the vulgar. We had believed, till now, on the evidence of our deceitful ſenſes, fire always endeavors to aſcend; but he employs three chapters to prove its tendency is always downwards. He generouſly combats one of the fineſt demonſtrations of Newton *. He allows, indeed, there is ſome truth in this demonſtration, but, like the Iriſhman, celebrated in the ſchools, he ſays, *Hoc fateor; verum contra ſic argumentor.* This I confeſs; but, on the contrary, thus I argue. It is true his rea-

* The propoſition is that in which Sir Iſaac demonſtrates, by fluxions, that every body, moving in a curve, if it paſs through equal ſpaces, tends towards a center, and *vice verſâ*.

ſoning

ſoning againſt Newton has been proved to be a mere ſophiſm; but, as M. de Fontenelle ſays, "Men deceive themſelves, but *great* men confeſs they deceive themſelves." You ſee clearly the Reverend Father wants only a trifling confeſſion to become a great man. The ſagacity of his genius extends to every thing, without ever being out of his ſphere. Speaking of madneſs, (book 5. chap. 7.) he ſays, "The organs of the brain in a madman are *a curve line, and the geometrical expreſſion of an equation.*" What depth of underſtanding! Is it not as if we ſaw a rich man calculating his wealth? In ſhort, is it not eaſy to perceive, from his ideas and his ſtyle, how profoundly he is ſkilled in all theſe matters? Do you know that, in his *Univerſal Mathematics*, he ſays, "That which we call the largeſt angle is really the ſmalleſt, and the more acute an angle is the greater it is?" That is to ſay, he pretends the thing contained is larger than the thing containing. This, like many other of his diſcoveries, is indeed moſt marvellous.

Do you know likewiſe, when he ſpeaks of the vaniſhing of infinitely ſmall quantities by multiplication, he wittily adds, *that a perſon often riſes only to fall on his face?*

You certainly will never be able to reſiſt both his geometry and his wit. This new Father Garaſſe,

Garaſſe, who attacks every thing good, could not be expected to ſpare you. He is ſtill vain of his oppoſition to your Newtons, your Leibnitzes, your Reaumurs, and your Maupertuis. He is the Don Quixote of mathematicians; with this difference, that Don Quixote always imagined he fought with giants, while the Reverend Father thinks he is himſelf a giant.

Let us not diſturb the good opinion he entertains of his abilities; let us leave in peace the manes of his works, buried in the Journal de Trevoux; which, thanks to his care, ſo well maintains the character given it by Boileau; and certainly for ſome years back, modern memoirs cannot make us regret the old. Perhaps he may write another letter to encourage the univerſe to be of his opinion concerning your muſic; for he has already publiſhed ſeveral pamphlets to encourage the univerſe, and to enlighten the univerſe. Imitate the univerſe, Sir, and return him no anſwer.

Account of the DISPUTES of ROUSSEAU the Poet, with M. DE VOLTAIRE.

MEN of letters are ſtill divided in their opinions concerning this quarrel. The origin of it, or who was moſt in fault are ſtill unknown. Rouſſeau lays the whole blame on M. de Voltaire, who has defended himſelf with conſiderable wit.

We

We ſhall lay before the reader one of his letters, which has never yet appeared, or at leaſt has appeared with ſeveral alterations: but we will firſt give an account in a few words of this celebrated conteſt.

The diſagreement between theſe two poets began at Bruſſels. Rouſſeau firſt met with M. de Voltaire at the college of Louis le Grand, and admired his extraordinary genius for poetry. Young Arouet took care to cultivate an acquaintance which promiſed to be ſo advantageous. He extolled him in all his works, and Rouſſeau, flattered by this reſpect, deſcribed him as a poet who ſhould one day become the glory of the age in which he lived. The author of the Henriade never failed to conſult him on all his writings, and their friendſhip increaſed every day.

Rouſſeau filled all his letters with his praiſes—"You would do me a pleaſure (ſays he to one of his friends) if you would ſend me the verſes of M. Arouet. He is a young man of very great abilities, and will make a good uſe of them if he follows the advice I am always ready to give him when aſked." In a letter, written in 1719, he ſays, "M. Arouet has ſent his Oedipus with a very handſome letter. I am not ſurpriſed at the great ſucceſs of this piece, which it certainly deſerves. It has nearly attained all the perfec-

tion the ſubject would admit." And, in another letter, written in 1722, are theſe remarkable words, "Monſieur de Voltaire has paſſed eleven days at Bruſſels. He has been ſo kind as to leave his poem with me for five or ſix days. It certainly does him great honor. Our nation wanted a work of that kind. The conduct of it is admirable, and the poetry beautiful; except in two or three places, concerning which he agrees with me in opinion. In ſhort, it contains nothing which can be juſtly criticiſed."

The two poets, unfortunately meeting again at Bruſſels, conceived the moſt irreconcileable hatred to each other; the origin of which, according to Rouſſeau and his partiſans, was Voltaire's reading to him his Epiſtle to Julia, at preſent to Urania. This work he heard with an indignation which he could not help manifeſting to the author; who, irritated by his reproaches, replied in an abuſive manner.

This is Rouſſeau's ſtory; but his adverſaries, and the friends of the poet whom he decried, ſuſpected him of ſecret enmity. The ſucceſs of Mariamne was, according to them, the real cauſe of this enmity. Rouſſeau had written a Mariamne, after the old piece of Triſtan, which was hiſſed, while that of his rival was acted forty times. Whatever was the reaſon, it is much to be lamented

mented (to uſe the words of the author of the *Nouveau Dictionnaire Hiſtorique*) that two men, who did honor to France and to poetry, ſhould fill their immortal works with invectives and ſarcaſms, which, deſcending to poſterity, muſt perpetuate their hatred and their ſhame. What is moſt ſingular, is, that they labored to inſpire the public with a contempt for each other, which they did not feel themſelves, and to deſtroy an eſteem which they were forced to preſerve, in ſpite of their endeavors to the contrary. We ſhall now lay before the reader the letter of M. de Rouſſeau, and afterwards that of M. de Voltaire, much leſs known, though infinitely better written, and a clear proof that he was as much ſuperior to his antagoniſt in proſe, as M. de Rouſſeau was to him in his odes.

LETTER of M. de ROUSSEAU to M**, with ſome Notes, which have never before appeared.

"I HAVE juſt received, Sir, the laſt libel which Voltaire has publiſhed againſt me; for he has not been deterred by the affronts he met with on account of the former. This is in the ſame ſtyle. It conſiſts of two parts, one of which is a preface in proſe, under the name of

and always in the moſt extravagant terms*, calling me his maſter, and his model, and ſending me ſeveral little pieces, written after his manner, in which his ſevere and ſatirical genius began to diſplay itſelf, but in reality containing but little of that wit and thoſe ſimple graces which ſo powerfully charm, and which alone bring over the reader to the intereſt of the writer; an art which anger and malice cannot teach, and which M. de Voltaire has, it is very evident, never poſſeſſed.

I have ſtill by me ſeveral of his letters; and the Baron de Breteuil, who patronized him, and who regularly maintained a correſpondence with me till his death, frequently wrote to me concerning him, and informed me ſometimes of his ſucceſs, and ſometimes of his miſcarriage and diſgrace.

By the letters of this nobleman, which I ſtill preſerve, and which are for the moſt part written in his own hand, I became acquainted with ſome of the firſt misfortunes of this irritable poet; any one of which were ſufficient to produce his amendment, had that been poſſible. The inſult which he drew on himſelf from the hand of old Poiſon, behind the ſcenes at the theatre; the

* It cannot be denied that M. de Voltaire began his acquaintance with Rouſſeau, Maupertuis, and others, by adulation, though it ended by abuſe.

mark

mark which an officer, whom he had ſlandered, left him on the Pont de Sèive; his impriſonment in the Baſtille for ſatirical and ſcandalous verſes; his ridiculous and frantic behaviour in the pit at the theatre while his Artemira was hiſſed; and an infinity of other ſuch inſtances might eaſily be found in the letters I received from M. de Breteuil, if I would take the pains to look for them. Indeed I ſhould not mention this, did not ſuch a correſpondence, maintained without interruption during twenty years with one of the moſt illuſtrious friends I ever poſſeſſed, ſufficiently prove the falſe and audacious malevolence of the man who can pretend I was ungrateful to my benefactor, and *ſtung the boſom* (to uſe his expreſſion) *in which I was cheriſhed.* His friendſhip and my gratitude are atteſted by all my writings; one of my beſt performances is an epiſtle addreſſed to that very nobleman. Permit me, Sir, to digreſs for a moment, and aſk you, whether it be not eaſy, from this atrocious calumny, to judge of all the accuſations he has brought againſt me? They may be reduced, ſetting aſide the abuſe, to which I pretend not to anſwer, to a liſt of perſons whom, as he pretends in his preface, I have inſulted. But where can theſe names be found in any of my writings? If the characters I have drawn reſemble ſome perſons he has named, why

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ſhould

ſhould he inform the public of this perhaps imaginary reſemblance? Can he penetrate my intentions? Or will he have the effrontery to ſay, I have made him my confident? Does he imagine he will be much thanked by thoſe perſons whom he pretends to recognize in ſome characters which are ridiculed in my works?

Should I deſcribe a conceited fool, pillaging all the authors he met with, and then decrying, in hopes to prevent others from reading them, and ſo diſcovering his thefts; ſhould I exhibit the ſame man endeavoring to conceal the moſt profound ignorance under the pride of pedantry, and manifeſting, even in his gait and geſtures, all the abſurdities of a madman, diſplaying a raſhneſs which, beginning in inſolence, always terminates in meanneſs; in ſhort, one given up to the utmoſt extravagance of ſentiments and conduct; ſometimes cloathing religion in the garb of impiety, and at others inveſting impiety in the robes of religion; would M. de Voltaire think himſelf obliged to any one who ſhould ſay, this muſt certainly have been intended for your portrait? Yet this is what he has done by thoſe perſons whom he has named, and whom he alone has inſulted.

He alone therefore is the ſatiriſt, while I have only done what all poets, orators, and preachers,

or whoever have undertaken to correct or ridicule the vices of mankind have done before. Boileau, our maſter in every thing, uſed no ſuch ceremony. He ſcrupled not to attack by name the Voltaires,* and other abſurd characters of his time.

Wanting Boileau's genius, I conſider it as becoming me to uſe more reſerve. I have therefore named no one in my writings. I have too good an opinion of thoſe who do not ſuppoſe themſelves levelled at, to imagine they will regard the malicious applications of ſuch a man as Voltaire; and as to thoſe who may ſuſpect that they were the perſons meant, I ſhall addreſs them in the words of the Fabuliſt:

Suſpicione ſi quis errabit ſûa,
Et trahet ad ſe quod erit commune omnium,
Stulte nudabit animi conſcientiam. †.

This contemptible method, which he has employed to procure me enemies, is only a wretched repetition of the raſcally artifices by which I have

* What Rouſſeau ſays here of the talents of M. de Voltaire, is too evidently the effect of paſſion; eſpecially when he will not allow there is merit in his ſatire.

† Should any one ſuſpiciouſly apply to himſelf what was not meant to be perſonal, he would only thereby fooliſhly betray a conſciouſneſs of his own guilt.

before

before time been ſlandered. He has not the gift of invention, but ſince luckily his character is better known than that of thoſe whom he has copied, it is to be hoped he will not have the ſame ſucceſs. I do not allude here to the infamous verſes which have been attributed to me ſo unjuſtly, and in which the blackeſt malice cannot pretend to diſcover either my ſtyle or manner of thinking; for if any ſhould ſtill have the effrontery to accuſe me of being the author of theſe, they will meet with no one ſimple enough to believe them. This diſcuſſion has led me too far from my ſubject, I ſhall therefore again reſume my narration.

I was ſtill at Vienna when he ſent me his tragedy of Oedipus. Notwithſtanding the numerous faults of this piece, as I am always ready to excuſe the imperfections of young writers, in hopes that time and ſtudy may mature their judgment, I returned him an anſwer with which a poet of much greater abilities ought to have been ſatisfied. I only adviſed him, for the future, to ſpeak with more reſpect of Sophocles and other great men, whom it was his cuſtom to abuſe in his prefaces. He ſent me, ſome time after, a copy of the beginning of his poem, entitled, The League. Having learned from my anſwer that Prince Eugene had done me the honor to appoint me to accompany him, on his intended journey into the

Low

Low Countries, he wrote me word that, as ſoon as he knew I was arrived, he would do himſelf the pleaſure of paying me a viſit.

As this intended expedition of the Prince was laid aſide, for reaſons which were then known to every body, I, in the year following, performed my propoſed journey alone, and Voltaire took care not to fail to be at Bruſſels two months after in the *ſuite* of Madame de Rupelmonde,* whom ſome family concerns obliged to go to Holland.

I here cannot avoid relating in what manner I was informed of his arrival.

* M. de Voltaire, on his way to Bruſſels, paſſed through Cambray. At an entertainment, at which he was preſent with Madame de Rupelmonde, the company expreſſed a deſire to ſee his Oedipus played in the preſence of its author. M. de Voltaire was deſired to write to the Governor to requeſt permiſſion that that piece might be repreſented. He immediately left the table and produced the following *placet*:

The congreſs, after ſhort debate,
Your Lordſhip hereby ſupplicate,
To-morrow's anxious cares t' enchant,
A tragedy you'd pleaſe to grant;
And that their hopes be not poſtpon'd,
They beg i' th' name of Rupelmonde.
A name ſo potent, who can fear,
You'll not its magic pow'r revere!
Or that you ſhould refuſe ſuch meaſures
As might contribute to our pleaſures?

The

The Count de Lanoy, whom I met with, about noon, at the houſe of the Marquis de Prié, aſked me, if I knew who that young man was whom he had juſt ſeen in the church of Sablons; and who had ſo much offended every body, by his indecent behavior during the ſervice, that the people were on the point of turning him out. A moment afterwards I learned, by a complimentary note from Voltaire, that it was he himſelf who had arrived at midnight, and immediately began to ſignalize himſelf in that very modeſt manner.

In the afternoon I went to ſee him, and the next day introduced him to the Marquis de Prié, who was then Governor to the Princeſs de la Tour, and at other houſes where I was acquainted; and where, to my great confuſion, he behaved no better than he had done in the church of Sablons. He continued at Bruſſels about three weeks, during which I was obliged to ſuffer, for the expiation of

The anſwer returned to this *placet* was as follows:

Love form'd you, charming Rupelmonde,
Of taſte both arbiter and guide,
And, while you graceful ſit enthron'd,
To give you pleaſure is our pride.

So much to ſhew our zeal we ſeek,
To-morrow ſhall, to pay you tribute,
The tragedy and the critique,
The author and the piece exhibit.

my

my ſins, whatever importunity, extravagance, the ſpirit of diſſipation, and incurable conceit could inflict on a man of a ſedate and reſerved diſpoſition.

But, as God has endued me with a patience which frequently turns out more to my diſadvantage than my profit, I manifeſted no kind of uneaſineſs at his behavior, but continued to heap on him all manner of civilities. He ſhewed me his poem of the League, which I returned him two days after, adviſing him, as a friend, to correct the ſatirical and paſſionate declamation in which he had indulged, on every occaſion, againſt the catholic church, the Pope, the ſecular and regular clergy, and in ſhort againſt all government eccleſiaſtical and civil; requeſting him to conſider, that an epic poem is not to be written in the ſame manner as a ſatire, and that the ſtyle of Virgil, and not that of Juvenal, ſhould be his model.

At the ſame time I gave him the praiſe I thought he deſerved for ſeveral characters, which appeared to me well drawn, and eſpecially for that of M. de Roſni, which I was afterwards much ſurpriſed to find he had retrenched, and ſubſtituted in its place that of the Admiral de Coligni, the hero of the proteſtants, no doubt, but in reality the incendiary of France.

I have

I have ſince diſcovered the reaſon of this alteration to have ariſen from a humiliating menace, which he drew on himſelf from the late Duke de Sulli, his firſt protector; whoſe juſt indignation he appeaſed by one of his uſual meanneſſes.

I do not mean to become the champion of my own works. It belongs neither to Voltaire nor me to judge, but to the public only, of whom it appears hitherto my bookſellers do not complain.

I am however very ready to inform this pretended wit, that I never knew a word of German, and that, in whatever country I have been, I have always frequented the company of people who ſpoke French better than he, who underſtand the propriety and true harmony of the language, and whoſe ears are not ſo vitiated as to confound the pronunciation of *père* with that of *guerre*, or to imagine that *amour* and *amour*, taken in the ſame ſenſe, can be a good rhime, or to call the correctneſs of the Malherbes, and Corneilles, and the Racines, ridiculous pedantry.

He went to Holland, with Madame de Rupelmonde, whence I received an account, a ſhort time before he left it, of an infamous tranſaction of his, intended to produce a quarrel between M. Baſnage and M. Le Clerc, had not a ſeaſonable diſcovery juſtly turned the indignation of thoſe two learned

learned perſons on the author of the miſchievous contrivance.

This action, much more odious than his other impertinencies, had ill diſpoſed me to receive him favorably on his return. However, as he was not to ſtay long at Bruſſels, I thought it beſt to conceal my diſlike, and we remained on very good terms; till, one day, having deſired me to conduct him to a public walk without the town, he thought proper to repeat to me a poetical piece, written after his manner, and entitled an Epiſtle to Julia, ſo filled with the moſt horrible blaſphemies againſt whatever is moſt revered in religion, and even againſt Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, whoſe name was every where accompanied by an epithet which I cannot think of without ſhuddering, in ſhort, ſo dreadfully impious, that I muſt have been wanting in my duty both to religion and the public, could I have patiently liſtened to ſuch an abominable production. Aſſuming therefore a ſerious air, I aſked him, how he could think of repeating to me ſuch a deteſtable compoſition?

He then pretended to reaſon in defence of his principles, but I again interrupted him, and told him, unleſs he changed the diſcourſe I would get out of the carriage. He then ſaid no more, but begged of me not to ſpeak of that piece. This I promiſed him, and kept my word; but other

perſons,

perſons, with whom he probably had not taken the ſame precaution, afterwards mentioned it to me; and, among others, a lady of the firſt conſequence in France, and a Prince whoſe name will eaſily be gueſſed, and whoſe evidence is equally reſpectable with his birth and great abilities. I ſhall mention hereafter on what occaſion he changed the title, and ſoftened the expreſſions of this infamous poem; which, even as it ſtands at preſent, ſtrikes libertines themſelves with horror.

Such is the man, who, ſtealing, according to his cuſtom, the end of a ſong, formerly written by Boileau againſt Liniere, has dared to ſay, my writings ſhall be burnt if poſſible before their author; forgetting that it is not two years ſince one of his books,* avowedly written by him, and printed at his expence, with the initial letters of his name, was publickly burnt by the hands of the hangman, and that the decree iſſued againſt him on that occaſion is ſtill in force.

From that time I perceived he was more reſerved to me than before, and at length he took his leave, and went by the way of Marimont, where the Duke d'Aremberg was then hunting; and I afterwards learned at Mons, from this nobleman and two of his gentlemen, that Voltaire had

* The Philoſophical Letters.

ſpoken

ſpoken of me at Marimont, in the moſt ſcandalous manner; and a friend of mine, a Colonel, who has ſince been Major-General and Governor of Dam, told me, that meeting with him at an inn at Mons, he ſo offended the company, by the abuſe with which he loaded me, that they were near throwing him out of the window, and certainly would have done ſo, had he not taken refuge under the name of the Duke d'Aremberg.

On my return from England, I learned, he had talked of me in the ſame manner at Paris.

It was then he firſt thought of that pleaſant expreſſion, a Germaniſm, which has ſince ſerved for twelve years together, as a truſty toledo, wherewith to combat all my writings, paſt, preſent and to come. Some time after, his Mariamne was acted, a printed copy of which I received from a friend of mine, to whom I remarked, in my anſwer, a few of the improprieties which had offended me in this doubly yet ill-begotten brat, whoſe deformities he endeavoured to correct, preſenting it to the public as newly born, though hiſſed from the ſtage but ſix months before.

I know not how this letter came to his knowledge, but it ſoon produced me another anonymous one, in an unknown hand, in which no abuſe was ſpared. To this I returned him an anſwer in eight lines, telling him, that, " after the

manner in which he had treated Jeſus Chriſt, I was not ſo delicate as to be offended at any inſult he might offer; but that I could not but remind him, it became a man who had given the world ſo powerful a weapon againſt himſelf, to be circumſpect and careful to avoid creating enemies."

After this I heard nothing of him for eight or nine years, at leaſt nothing relative to myſelf. His adventure at the Hotel de Sulli, his flight from France, his vagaries at London, and his quarrels with his bookſellers, which every day furniſhed matter for the Gazettes, till he had engaged that of Utrecht in his intereſt, did not concern me, either directly or indirectly.

The charitable advice I had given him in my note, it is probable, made him on his return to France change the title of his Epiſtle to Julia, to that of an Epiſtle to Urania, and ſubſtitute blaſphemies leſs ſhocking than thoſe he had originally written; in which he contents himſelf with avowing, he is no chriſtian, and that it is ridiculous to be one. Still, however, it attracted the notice of the police, and he had no other way of eſcaping, but by affirming the work was not by him, but by the late Abbé de Chaulieu. If this fact be true, as a perſon worthy of credit has aſſured me it is,

we

we may learn on whom his common place invectives concerning calumny ought to fall.

At length arrived the time when he was to give looſe to his rage. M. de Launai, a man of learning, at Paris, with whom I kept up a correſpondence, having ſent me the tragedy of Zara, which was then acting, together with his remarks on the piece and the author, I anſwered him in the ſame ſtyle; and this anſwer having been circulated, contrary to my intention, Voltaire, with whom every new ſucceſs is the prelude to new abſurdities, thought this was the time to ruin my character, and directly produced his famous Temple of Taſte; a work that drew on him the indignation of all Paris, for the town eſpouſed my cauſe with ſo much warmth, that never was any one more completely revenged than myſelf, nor any ſlanderer more effectually mortified than my antagoniſt, who for three months ſcarcely dared to ſhew his head.

At length, however, the public having forgotten his extravagance, he endeavoured to regain its good opinion by his Adelaide, which failed of ſucceſs, and by his *Letters on the Engliſh Nation*, which, as I have already ſaid, were publickly burnt. I forgot to mention, that, before the publication of his Temple of Taſte, I received a letter from M. de Launai, in which he informed me of his

menaces againſt myſelf and him, and added, that, with reſpect to the laſt, he had taken care to let him know, if ever he made free with his name, he might expect an immediate reply, and that not with his pen; the conſequence of which was, that this Hero of Parnaſſus, having met with him at the theatre, apologized in ſo abject a manner as to excite both his pity and contempt, as I was informed by M. de Launai in his letter.

Such, Sir, is the real ſtate of this diſpute, and the cauſe of his invectives, which I might eaſily have prevented, if I would have condeſcended to the overtures of reconciliation made me laſt year by one of his intimate friends; and if I had not thought it unworthy of me to enter into a negotiation with a man ſo univerſally deteſted as Voltaire. It would have been no leſs eaſy for me to puniſh the publiſhers of this abuſe, if I had thought proper to avail myſelf of the rigorous edicts of the magiſtracy of Amſterdam, againſt all perſonal ſatires and libels; but it is important to me that the true character of ſuch an enemy ſhould be known, which is beſt effected by the rage and ſcurrility of his own writings. I am happy that no ſuch traits are diſcernable in mine; and, if neceſſity has obliged me to lay open ſome of the ſhameful actions of which he has been guilty,

I can

I can ſafely affirm, it is not anger which has guided my pen. This is what I gave that unknown friend to underſtand who offered his mediation, for which I returned him my thanks, but did not accept; aſſuring him, that the abuſe of Voltaire had done me no injury, and could give me no pain, and that I only wiſhed he would behave with more diſcretion for the time to come.

Boileau, whoſe example I ſhould always wiſh to imitate, has taught me by his indifference for the invectives of the the Pradons, the Bonnecorſes, and the Cotins, to deſpiſe thoſe of the Lenglets, and Gacons and the Voltaires. My ſentiments on this head are known to all my friends, and I have more fully explained them in an Epiſtle which I wrote ſome time ago, and which will appear with the firſt edition of my works. Voltaire may therefore diſgorge all the filth he pleaſes, this is the laſt anſwer he will receive from me. I am quite weary of ſo dirty a buſineſs, and, if it ſhould be neceſſary to ſay any more on the ſubject, ſhall only ſend to the printer, as I have been frequently ſolicited to do, a collection of all the jeux d'eſprits in proſe and verſe, and of all the memoirs and letters which I have received, relative to this conteſt, at different times; eſpecially immediately after the publication of his *Temple of Taſte*. I have enough of theſe to furniſh two good volumes.

This

This is the only method in which I can return an anſwer with honor, except, however, a paſſing ſalutation as occaſion may ſerve in my future writings. At preſent this may ſuffice to give you the information of which you was ſo deſirous, and likewiſe to warn him, that he whoſe own houſe is made of glaſs, ought not to throw ſtones at that of his neighbour.

Enghein, May 27, 1736.

M. de VOLTAIRE'S ANSWER* to the preceding Letter.

GENTLEMEN,

A SIMPLE kind of man, by name Rouſſeau, has printed in your Journal a long letter relative to me, in which, luckily for me, there is nothing but ſlander, and, unluckily for himſelf, not the leaſt reſemblance to wit. The reaſon why this piece is ſo very bad, gentlemen, is, that it is entirely his own; neither Marot, Rabelais, nor d'Ouville have furniſhed him with a ſingle idea.

* Rouſſeau's letter has appeared in more than ten different collections, though that of Voltaire has but ſeldom been publiſhed. We inſert it here with the more pleaſure, as it is to be found in no edition of his works. We have added ſome ſhort but neceſſary notes.

This

This is the ſecond time in his life he has truſted to his own invention, and he never ſucceeds when he invents. His lawſuit with M. de Saurin ought to have rendered him more prudent. But it has already been obſerved of him, that, though his works are extremely labored, he is not yet ſufficicently corrected. He has long been excluded from all good company, and is continually doing his utmoſt, by the verſes he at preſent writes, to get himſelf excluded from the number of the poets. With reſpect to the facts which he has advanced againſt me, it is well known his teſtimony deſerves no credit; and as to his verſes, I only wiſh he may continue to write in the ſame ſtyle, whenever he attacks reſpectable characters.

He has preſented you, gentlemen, with an inſipid romance of the manner in which his knowledge of me commenced. I ſhall now, in a ſhort and ſimple ſtory, lay before you the real truth.

He begins by ſaying, that ſome ladies of his acquaintance took him one day to the Jeſuits college, where I was then a ſcholar; and that he was deſirous of ſeeing me, becauſe I had gained ſome prizes. But he ought to have added, he made this viſit, becauſe his father having been ſhoemaker to mine during twenty years, my father had formerly procured him a place with a lawyer, where it had been much to his credit if he had con-

continued, but which he loſt for having diſowned his birth. It may likewiſe be added, that my father, my relations, and all thoſe under whom I ſtudied, forbade me to ſee him, and ſo bad was his character, that when any ſcholar had committed a fault, of a certain kind, he was ſure to be told, he would become an abſolute Rouſſeau.

It is true, that about 1720, I accompanied a French lady of diſtinction who was going to Holland. Rouſſeau may ſay, if he pleaſes, I went in the *ſuite* of this lady. A ſervant always employs the terms moſt familiar to him; every one ſpeaks his own language. We paſſed by Bruſſels; Rouſſeau pretends I heard maſs very irreverently, and that he learned, with horror, the indecency of my behaviour, from the Comte de Lanoy; for he always likes to cite great names in matters of ſmall importance. I might perhaps have manifeſted ſome little levity during the celebration of the maſs. The Comte de Lanoy, however, ſays, Rouſſeau is a liar, and makes a very improper uſe of his name to ſupport his impertinent and groundleſs aſſertions. I am very ſorry for any ſuch indiſcretion, but it certainly does not become M. Rouſſeau to make ſuch a reproach. Is it decent for the author of ſo many licentious epigrams, and infamous couplets againſt his benefactors and friends,

friends, in ſhort the author of the Moyſade*, to accuſe me of having talked in church, ſixteen years ago? I pity the poor man, but let us continue our ſtory.

Firſt, he ſays, he preſented me to the Governor of the Low Countries. Vanity is very powerful. It is much more probable that I was introduced by the lady whom I had the honor to accompany: but men always make vanity ſupply the deficiencies of education.

At length, however, I met with him at Bruſſels, and ſhewed him my Henriade. He reproaches me, I know not why, for having in this Poem taken the part of the beſt of Kings, and the greateſt man Europe has produced, againſt the prieſts, by whom he was calumniated and perſecuted. I am willing, however, Rouſſeau ſhould eſpouſe the cauſe of monks, while I defend that of Henry IV.

He was much ſurprized, he ſays, to find I had ſubſtituted Admiral de Coligni to Roſni. Our critic is not deeply read in hiſtory. Theſe little abſurdities are very common with thoſe who only poſſeſs the talent of arranging words in a certain order. Admiral Coligni was the head of a powerful party, in the time of Charles IX. and was killed when Roſni was only ſeven years old.

* The Moyſade was not written by Rouſſeau; M. de Voltaire has confeſſed this elſewhere.

Roſni afterwards became the miniſter and favorite of Henry IV. How then could I retrench the character of Roſni, from the Henriade, to ſubſtitute that of Admiral Coligni? The fact is, I have made Dupleſſis Mornay ſupply the place of Roſni. Rouſſeau, perhaps, does not know that this Dupleſſis Mornay was a warrior, a learned man, a rigid philoſopher, in one word, exactly ſuch a character as I had to deſcribe. But we muſt permit a mere rhimer to be a little ignorant. Let us proceed to matters of more conſequence.

We ſometimes find people who underſtand but very indifferently an occupation they have followed all their lives. It is remarkable that Rouſſeau knows not even how to ſlander. The origin of his hatred to me, according to his own account, aroſe, in part, from my having ſpoken of him in a moſt opprobrious manner to the Duke d'Aremberg. I know not what he means by opprobrious. If I had ſaid, he was baniſhed France by an arret of parliament, and that he wrote contemptible verſes at Bruſſels, I ſhould have done him no injuſtice; but I mentioned nothing of all this, and in order to confute this fooliſh falſity, as well as the reſt, I ſhall here give the copy of a letter I have juſt received from the Duke d'Aremberg.

I AM

Enghein, Sept. 8, 1736.

I AM much diſpleaſed, Sir, to find my name mentioned in the *Bibliotheque François*, in an article relative to you. I am made to ſpeak very improperly and falſely.

I am, Sir, your moſt
obedient humble ſervant,
D'AREMBERG.

Let us now ſee if he has been more fortunate in his other accuſations. I recited to him, he ſays, an Epiſtle againſt the Chriſtian Religion. If he means the Moyſade, he knows very well I am not the author of that piece. He aſſerts, I have been proceeded againſt by the Police of Paris, as the writer of this pretended Epiſtle; to determine this it will be only neceſſary to conſult the regiſters, in which his name may be repeatedly found, but mine no where *. Rouſſeau would rejoice had I written againſt religion; but I cannot bring myſelf to imitate him in any thing.

He has heard it ſaid, hypocriſy is neceſſary, if we wiſh to triumph over our enemies; and I grant he has had recourſe to this admirable expedient.

* The manner in which M. de Voltaire defends himſelf againſt this accuſation, unfortunately too true, is more ingenious than ſatisfactory.

Inur'd

Inur'd t' affronts Rouſſeau had been,
With groans and catcals, chaced the ſcene.
From Paris was, with cudgels, driv'n;
'Mong Germans, then, to be forgiv'n,
And act the devotee, he ran:
He could not act the honeſt man.

But to act the devotee is not alone ſufficient to do miſchief, ſome addreſs is neceſſary. God be thanked, Rouſſeau's incapacity is equal to his hypocriſy: without this counterpoiſe he had been dangerous indeed.

The pretended reaſons of the pretended rupture between this great man and myſelf, therefore, are, that I have behaved inattentively at maſs, that I have recited verſes written after the manner of the Moyſade, and that I have ſpoken of him in terms not ſufficiently reſpectful to the Duke d'Aremberg. I ſhall now proceed, gentlemen, to explain the real cauſe of his hatred; and will conſent, which is ſaying a great deal, to be eſteemed as infamous as my accuſer, if I advance a ſingle word it is in his power to diſprove.

He recited to the lady I had the honor to accompany, and myſelf, a kind of allegory againſt the parliament of Paris, under the title of the Judgment of Pluto: a wretched piece, in which he is very liberal of invectives againſt the Attorney-General and his Judges.

He

He concludes, as well as I can remember, by theſe lines:

> And may their ſkins, ſtretch'd on the juſtice-bench,
> Hereafter be a ſeat to their ſucceſſors.

Theſe are imitated from an epigram by M. Boindin againſt Rouſſeau, which is univerſally known. The difference between this epigram and the verſes of Rouſſeau is, that the epigram is good.

He afterwards recited a work, the title of which is no proof either of an able head or a good heart; it is called the Palinodia. You are to be informed, he was the author of an Epiſtle to the Duke de Noailles, then Comte d'Ayen. In this work he had ſaid,

> His ſhape behold! his air! and, hark!
> He ſings with muſic all his own!
> From Delphos ſure Apollo's flown!

This piece, written in a ſimilar ſtile throughout, was, as you may ſuppoſe, univerſally ridiculed. However, the Duke ſtill continued to protect, though he deſpiſed him; and condeſcended to give him a place. Could you imagine it? He wrote a letter, at that very time, filled with invectives againſt his benefactor. This letter came to the knowledge of the Duke—I affirm nothing but what

what that nobleman can prove to be fact; and muſt add, he poſſeſſed ſo much greatneſs of ſoul as to forget the ingratitude of the poet.

Rouſſeau, as ſoon as he had left France, wrote his Palinodia. He was certainly in the right to diſclaim dull panegyric, but his Palinodia ought undoubtedly to have been a better production. Unfortunately for him, it merely conſiſted in ſpeaking ill of his benefactor. Marſhal Villars, the friend of the nobleman whom he had inſulted, being informed of the inſolence of Rouſſeau, wrote to Prince Eugene in theſe terms.—"I hope you will do juſtice to a *** who has not been ſufficiently puniſhed in France." This letter, added to the ingratitude with which Rouſſeau repaid the kindneſs of Prince Eugene, entirely diſgraced him with that Prince. Such, gentlemen, is the origin of all the enmity Rouſſeau has ſhewn againſt me. He imagined I had informed Marſhal Villars, yet it is very certain I never ſpoke to him on any ſuch ſubject; the truth of which aſſertion may be eaſily known from thoſe who are both friends and relations to Marſhal Villars. The letter was written to Prince Eugene, before Rouſſeau had ever read me his wretched Palinodia; and when he did read it, I contented myſelf with ſaying, I ſaw plainly that to obtain friends was not his purpoſe. I confeſs I told him, with a frankneſs which I have

have preſerved on every occaſion, " That his latter works did not pleaſe me; and that he would be only conſidered as having loſt his abilities and preſerved his venom." The public has juſtified my prediction; and Rouſſeau hates me the more becauſe I have told him a truth which daily becomes more conſpicuous.

As he had flattered me for a while, it was impoſſible he ſhould long refrain from writing verſes againſt me; he did ſo, and inſipid enough they were. True it is, at laſt, in an *Epiſtle againſt Calumny*, written about three years ago, I could not avoid, after having ſhewn the enormity of this crime, mentioning one by whom it had been ſo frequently committed. You remember what I have ſaid of him,

This aged rhimer cover'd with diſgrace, &c.

In theſe verſes I have certainly only expreſſed the opinion of the public. I have only followed the example of M. de la Motte, the moſt moderate of men, who has written thus of Rouſſeau:

Know'ſt thou the Paraſite, whoſe ſoul
Envy and jealouſy controul;
And ſlander with malicious grin;
Timid, yet impudent, in ſin;
Who ſureſt can, with ſecret guile,
Infuſe his poiſon in a ſmile;

The

The Plagiariſt, whoſe rancorous gall,
Which ſterneſt critic might appal,
So oft infected hath our eyes?
If ſuch thou know'ſt, him I deſpiſe;
Contemptuous view his abject pride,
Tho' to the gods he were allied *.

Who would imagine M. Rouſſeau would dare complain of having been ſlandered? Permit me here to remind you of an incident in an old Italian comedy. Harlequin having robbed a houſe, and not finding afterwards all the effects he had taken, begins to cry ſtop thief with all his might. Rouſſeau ſuppoſes, in the firſt place, that my Epiſtle on Calumny is addreſſed to a reſpectable lady, daughter of the Baron de Breteuil, one of his firſt maſters. But who has told him it is not addreſſed to one of the daughters of the Duke de Noailles, or M. Rouillé, or Marſhal Tallard? For has he ever had a maſter whom he has not repaid with ingratitude, and at length obliged to drive him from his ſervice? I am very willing this epiſtle ſhould be ſuppoſed to be addreſſed to the daughter of the Baron de Breteuil; who is

* Theſe verſes, which M. de Voltaire applies perſonally to Rouſſeau, are, in the Ode which M. de la Motte addreſſed to this poet, only intended as the general picture of a man deſerving deteſtation, "though to the gods he were allied." Never did La Motte ſully his writings by lampoons.

mar-

married to a man of the higheſt rank, and is illuſtrious for the honor ſhe reflects on the fine arts, by her genius and knowledge, which ſhe in vain endeavors to conceal.

This only ſerves to ſhow how bold Rouſſeau is in his wickedneſs, and how impudent in his falſehoods. He cries out he is ſlandered, and that he has never written verſes againſt M. de Breteuil. Would you know from whom I received the intelligence, he thus dares to contradict? From the very perſon to whom he was weak enough to confeſs it; the daughter of that ſame M. de Breteuil; who, as well as I, is acquainted with the fact, and in whoſe preſence I have the honor to write this truth, ſo univerſally known.

In vain does he plead he has ſtill in his poſſeſſion ſeveral letters from the Baron de Breteuil; his epiſtle, in verſe, to that nobleman is equally ineffectual; for what do they both prove? Why the exceſſive indulgence of the Baron de Breteuil, and the extreme inſolence of his domeſtic. Is this the only inſtance of his writing both for and againſt his benefactors? Has he not deified M. de Francine, after having ſatirized him in the moſt ſhameful manner in the Francinade? He wrote this ſatire becauſe his unſucceſsful Operas had been rejected by M. de Francine, and he

afterwards ſtiled him divine, becauſe Madame de Bouzoles having had the goodneſs to make a collection for him when he was in Switzerland, M. de Francine was generous enough to contribute twenty louis. I myſelf have, by the ſame rule, ſome title to a ſimilar epithet, for I ſubſcribed four louis on that occaſion *.

Indeed he is much in the wrong to wiſh ill to me; for, excluſive of the connexion between my father and his, I have at preſent a *valet de chambre* who is his kinſman, and a very honeſt fellow. This poor lad very often aſks my pardon for the paltry verſes of his relation †.

After all, is it my fault, that he was caned by the Sieur Pécour, in the Rue Caſſette, for having written and acknowledged thoſe couplets which are mentioned in his criminal proceſs?

* Can any thing juſtify or excuſe M. de Voltaire for making this public mention of the alms he pretends to have beſtowed on Rouſſeau? Four louis is a large ſum for ſuch a child, as M. de Voltaire muſt then have been, to have given. And ſuppoſing he had been ſo generous, ought he to have upbraided him with it? Is there any neceſſity thus openly to proclaim every thing we do; and ſometimes what we do not do.

† Voltaire has frequently repeated this in converſation; 'Was he then of ſo low an original?' ſaid M. *** one day to him. 'Do you not know who was his father?' returned Voltaire.—'Indeed I do not, anſwered M. ***, I imagined him the ſon of Pindar or of Horace.'

Jack

Jack Ketch will ſoon, I firmly hope,
Stop Berrin's hiſſing with his rope:
While, at the ladder's foot, his whip,
Shall make the dancing Pécour ſkip.

Is it my fault that he received the ſame treatment from M. de la Faye, though he afterwards appeaſed him by the mediation of M. de la Contade, and an offer of fifty louis, which M. de la Faye never received; that he ſlandered M. Saurin; that he was baniſhed by a perpetual arret; that he is the abhorrence of every one; or (which hurts him moſt) that he has written ſuch a number of miſerable rhimes?

Is it my fault that he has compoſed *Les Aïeux Chimériques*, *Le Caffé*, *La Ceinture Magique*, &c.? I am not reſponſible for theſe things.

To better his cauſe, he has aſſociated himſelf with the Abbé des Fontaines, author of a periodical work, of which you have heard; and this Abbé ſent, from time to time, libels againſt me into Holland.

It is proper you ſhould know, that, in 1724, I procured this Abbé his releaſe from the Bicêtre; where he would otherwiſe have been confined for the reſt of his days. This is a fact univerſally known. I have ſtill letters from him, in which he confeſſes that he owes to me both his honor

and his life. He has ſince been my tranſlator. I had written in Engliſh an Eſſay on the Epopœa. He rendered it into French, and his tranſlation was printed at Paris.

It is true there were as many miſtakes in the ſenſe as there were lines. In it he ſaid, that the Portugueſe had diſcovered America. He tranſlated *cakes eaten by the Trojans*, by this expreſſion, *the devouring hunger of Cacus*. He took the Engliſh word cakes to ſignify Cacus, and the Trojans to be cows. I corrected theſe errors, and printed his tranſlation at the end of my Henriade, till I could find time to write my Eſſay on the Epopœa in French; for I had compoſed it in the taſte of the Engliſh language, which is exceedingly different from ours. When I had finiſhed it, I placed it at the end of my Henriade, printed in France. The Abbé des Fontaines could never forgive my thus making uſe of what was my own.

From that time he has inceſſantly attacked both my reputation and that of the Henriade. I ſhall not anſwer him, nor endeavor to decry his verſes. Of theſe he has publiſhed a large volume, of which ſcarcely any body has heard. I myſelf am unacquainted with its title; his character however is a little better known.

Such, gentlemen, are the reſpectable perſons I have for my enemies. You may therefore boldly affirm,

affirm, whenever you meet with any wretched verſes pointed at me, they are written by Rouſſeau; or any deſpicable criticiſms, in proſe, the Abbé des Fontaines is their author.

I have the honor to be,
Gentlemen,
Your, &c.

M. de Voltaire did not content himſelf with this; he made enquiries into the events of the Life of Rouſſeau, as appears from his letters to the Abbé Mouſſinot. The following Memoirs were the fruit of theſe enquiries. The author of them endeavors to conceal himſelf, but he is ſufficiently diſcovered by the elegant ſimplicity of the ſtyle, and his enmity to Rouſſeau. This work is little known in France, becauſe it was not printed in that kingdom. The copy we have made uſe of is more accurate than thoſe which have hitherto appeared.

It is to be remarked, that it was one of the ſingularities of Voltaire to make theſe enquiries into the hiſtory of his enemies. What a quantity of information had he collected concerning the late M. Freron, La Baumelle, the Abbé Nonotte, and ſeveral others! If all his letters were to be publiſhed, the truth of what is here advanced would be very manifeſt.

Fon-

Fontenelle acted in a quite contrary manner. He ſeldom knew of the criticiſms publiſhed on his works; or, if they came in his way, by any accident, never attempted to diſcover their authors. This at once inſured his peace and repu ation, which nothing can hurt ſo much as theſe acrimonious replies, and which are too often made to reaſonable and well-founded objections.

M. de Voltaire ſhould have remembered, with tranquillity, that the public ſeldom adopt, but generally deſpiſe, criticiſms not well-founded; but, he was always fearful of loſing even a ſingle leaf of his laurel. Hence aroſe his anxiety when he was informed of any inimical pamphlet. He could ſcarcely recover his ſpirits for ſeveral days. "How! (ſaid M. Paliffot to him, on ſome occaſion, when he ſhewed uneaſineſs at the teazing of ſome of theſe literary inſects) Can a ſingle piſmire cauſe you ſo much pain?" "It is not, ſaid he, a ſingle piſmire: it is a neſt of piſmires." In this manner did he magnify the number of his enemies to excuſe his own extreme ſenſibility.

MEMOIRS OF J. B. ROUSSEAU.

By M. DE VOLTAIRE.

With NOTES to explain and correct certain Facts.

SECT. I.

His Birth, Education, and Comedy, entitled *Le Caffé:* Or, the Coffee-Houſe.

JEAN-BAPTISTE ROUSSEAU was born at Paris, in the Rue des Noyers, in the year 1670.* God, who diſpoſes as he pleaſes of what is called greatneſs or meanneſs among men, gave him a humble origin. His mother had been long a ſervant, and his father was a journeyman ſhoemaker; but having received ſome money by the death of a relation, became a maſter of eminence. He was alſo Syndic of the Cordwainer's company, and reſpected by his neighbors as an exceedingly honeſt man; a reputation no leſs difficult to acquire among the common people than among thoſe of higher rank.

The father ſpared no expence to give his ſon an education ſuperior to his birth, and at firſt intended him for the church; a profeſſion where a for-

* Or rather April 6, 1671, as appears by an extract from the regiſter inſerted in the Année Litteraire.

tune

tune is often made by merit, though unaſſiſted by family connections; and often even without either; but the young man's morals were no ways conformable to theſe views.

Rouſſeau's father, by a ſingular fatality, for a long time made ſhoes for M. Arouet, treaſurer to the chamber of accounts, father to him who has ſince been ſo much celebrated by the name of Voltaire, and who has had ſuch violent conteſts with Rouſſeau.

The Sieur Arouet undertook to place young Rouſſeau with an attorney, of the name of Gentil; but he ſhewed no more inclination for the law than he had done for the church. He read Catullus, went to the play, and paid no attention to his buſineſs.

One day his maſter having ordered him to carry ſome papers to a counſellor of the parliament, young Rouſſeau ſaid to the counſellor, with all the vanity of youth, M. Gentil, friend, has deſired me to leave theſe papers with you, as I came by. The counſellor coming the ſame day to the attorney's, and ſeeing this young man at the deſk, informed the maſter of the contemptible vanity of his clerk. The attorney chaſtiſed his inſolence, and his clerk immediately renounced the law. This adventure procured France a diſtinguiſhed poet.

Rouſſeau

Rouſſeau began his poetical career in 1694, by the comedy of *Le Caffé* (The Coffee-Houſe); manifeſtly the attempt of a young writer, without experience either in the world, in literature, or the practice of the theatre, and which ſhewed no marks of genius. A young officer, who was with me at its repreſentation, made the following impromptu on the occaſion:

If prone to ſleep we coffee take,
To keep us chearful and awake;
What ſtrange dull ſpell is then Rouſſeau's,
O'er coffee thus to make us doze?

This comedy produced the author ſome money, but no reputation. He wrote a good hand, however, and that was much more profitable to him than his wit; for it procured him a clerk's place in the ſecretary's office of M. de Tallard, Ambaſſador to England, and afterwards Marſhal of France.

His genius for poetry and ſatire ſoon began to ſhow itſelf; he had the impudence to write an epigram againſt M. de Tallard, who contented himſelf with diſmiſſing him from his ſervice.

SECT. II.

His firſt Maſters, and ſatirical Pieces.

Rousseau returned to France poor enough, and entered into the ſervice of the Biſhop of Viviers. There

There he compoſed the *Moyſade*,* and the Biſhop having ſeen this work, in the hand-writing of Rouſſeau, obliged him to quit his houſe with ignominy. Neceſſitated to ſeek a new maſter, he procured the place of ſecretary's clerk to the Swediſh embaſſy, where he remained but a ſhort time. His taſte and talents led him to Paris. On his return, having procured a letter to the Baron de Breteuil, at that time uſher to the embaſſies, he recited to him ſome of his verſes, and as M. de Breteuil was poſſeſſed of conſiderable underſtanding and taſte, he retained him in quality of his ſecretary and man of letters, and ſhewed him the utmoſt kindneſs.

In great houſes there are frequently little quarrels among the principal domeſtics. Rouſſeau, who poſſeſſed that dangerous vanity which the ſuperiority of genius never fails to inſpire, when it is not reſtrained by reaſon, was treated with ſome diſreſpect, in a journey he made with ſome ſervants of the family to Preuilly, an eſtate of the Baron's in Touraine. Rouſſeau revenged his quarrel with the ſervants on the maſter. He compoſed a little ſatire againſt him, which he entitled the Baron-

* The *Moyſade* neither was nor could be by Rouſſeau; it was the production of ſome wretched rhimer, who either is, or at leaſt deſerves to be forgotten.

nade,

nade, as he had entitled his piece againſt Moſes the Moyſade, and as he has ſince called that againſt M. de Francine the Francinade. He confeſſed this ſeveral years after to the Dutcheſs of St. Pierre, ſiſter to M. de Torcy. The report of this ſatire reached the ears of the Baron, but Rouſſeau proteſted, with an oath, it was all ſlander. It was eaſy to perſuade his maſter to believe him, for he had given no copy of this ſatire.

His maſter therefore ſtill continued his patron, and placed him with M. Rouillé, Intendant of the Finances, in hopes the M. Rouillé would procure him ſome employment, by means of which he might be enabled to cultivate his poetical talent. M. Rouillé had himſelf a conſiderable inclination to poetry, and wrote ſeveral paſſable ſongs; there it was Rouſſeau compoſed his firſt epiſtles in the ſtyle of Marot, and ſeveral ballads.

M. Rouillé had a miſtreſs, named Mademoiſelle de Louvancourt, who had a very fine voice, and for whom he ſometimes wrote ſongs. Rouſſeau, to oblige them, learned a little muſic, and wrote the words of ſome cantatas, which were ſet to muſic by Bernier, maſter of the holy chapel. Theſe were the firſt cantatas ever written in the French language. He afterwards retouched them. Some of theſe are very excellent. We are

indebted

indebted to him for this new ſpecies of poetical compoſition.

The life he led with M. Rouillé, might have been very agreeable; but his unfortunate inclination to ſatire ſoon deprived him both of his happineſs and hopes. M. Rouillé had written a ſong beginning thus:

To thee, fair Louvancourt, we every day
See ſome new lover ſigh and fall a prey.

Rouſſeau parodied it in this inſolent mannner:

To ſtrumpet Louvancourt we every day
See ſome poor ſimple lover fall a prey.

The remainder contains expreſſions which modeſty will not permit to be repeated.

Rouſſeau was now once more turned out of his patron's houſe in diſgrace; and this is the reaſon that in the editions of his works, which he has publiſhed in Holland, he has ſtruck out the name of M. Rouillé from the dedication of an ode which he had addreſſed to him, and which began thus:

Noble inheritor of all thoſe virtues,
Which in old Rhea's reign were ſo adored.

He likewiſe meant Mademoiſelle de Louvancourt, and her two ſiſters, by theſe verſes in one of his violent ſatires.

Three

Three wolves, or would be Graces, out of date,
Who all, by turns, my fame aſſaſſinate.*

SECT. III.

His Comedy of the Flatterer; his Operas.

ROUSSEAU, now deprived of every reſource, determined to try his ſucceſs at the theatre. As he played pretty well in comedy, his firſt intention was to form a company and commence actor; but this he never put in practice. However, at his leiſure intervals he had written a comedy, entitled the Flatterer, compoſed in a ſtyle much ſuperior to his other piece, The Coffee-Houſe. This was acted in 1695. It was well written, natural, and the plot ingeniouſly conducted. It had a kind of ſucceſs, though it was in fact only a feeble and rather cold imitation of the Tartuffe of Moliere.

His father, who was ſtill alive, and ſtill kept his ſhop in the *Rue des Noyers*, having heard it reported, that Rouſſeau had written a play which had excited the admiration of all Paris, thought himſelf too well paid for every pains he had beſtowed on the education of a ſon who did him ſuch great honor; though the author, ſince he had riſen

* The word wolves (louves) has in the French a punning alluſion to the name of Louvancourt.

to

to ſo much notice in the world, had deſpiſed the ſhoemaker, and the ſon had forgotten the father. Nevertheleſs, paternal tenderneſs made the old man haſten to the play-houſe, where, having paid his money, and taken his place in the pit, he began to boaſt to every body that he was father to the author, with all that ſatisfaction which a ſimple tradeſman and a tender parent might be expected to ſhow. Rouſſeau, who was then in the pit, was in haſte to get out, fearing an interview which might humble his vanity. His father followed him, and in the preſence of La Toriliere, an excellent actor, who was one of his cuſtomers, threw himſelf on his neck, and melting into tears, "Now, ſaid he, can you doubt that I am your father." "You, my father!" cried Rouſſeau; and, abruptly tearing himſelf from him, immediately quitted the place; leaving the ſpectators in amazement and the father in deſpair.

This action did more harm to his reputation than all the comedies ever written could have done it honor. M. Boindin, Attorney-General to the French treaſury, who was then young, was preſent at this ſcene, and told him openly the action was deteſtable, and that his vanity did not even underſtand its own intereſt; for that to have acknowledged his father would have increaſed his glory, and a diſavowal like this only ought to have incited

incited his bluſhes. This was the cauſe of that enmity which Rouſſeau manifeſted as long as he lived againſt M. Boindin, whom he preſently attacked with much aſperity in his epiſtle to Marot.*

Rouſſeau then changed his name, and took that of *Verniettes*. This was the name of a young man with whom he had been clerk. He was introduced by this name to the Prince of Armagnac, *Grand Ecuyer* of France; but, unfortunately for him, his father made ſhoes for the Prince of Armagnac, and came one day to bring the Prince a pair while his ſon was with him.

The father wept with grief and vexation, and complained to the Prince, who reprimanded Rouſſeau in the moſt mortifying manner, but to no purpoſe.

His father died with chagrin ſoon after, and the ſon would not even go into mourning.

A young page, who was in the Prince's apartment when Rouſſeau, after having aſſumed the

* M. Racine, the younger, in a letter which is publiſhed with the letters of Rouſſeau, affirms, that poet never denied his father. He ſays he has been informed by perſons whoſe character renders their veracity indubitable, that Rouſſeau never was aſhamed of his family; that, on the contrary, he made it his boaſt, that in his origin he reſembled Horace; and that he never had cauſed his father to ſhed any tears, except tears of joy.

name

name of *Verniettes*, was diſcovered by his father, immediately quoted the anagram of *Verniettes*; a word from which ſome enemies of Rouſſeau had extracted theſe others, *Tu te renies*, thou denieſt thyſelf.

And here I cannot help recollecting the end of an epigram which M. Boindin wrote about that time. It concluded thus:

> Apollo, wrathful, then decreed,
> This modern Marſyas ſhould be flay'd,
> The ſkin his father thus might uſe,
> If not to make, to cobble ſhoes.

After the comedy of the Flatterer, Rouſſeau became intimate with M. de Francine, maitre d'hotel to the King, ſon-in-law of the celebrated Lulli, and at that time director of the opera. M. de Francine engaged Rouſſeau to compoſe the opera of Jaſon. This tragedy, ſet to muſic by Colaſſe, had no ſucceſs. However, M. de Francine, as an encouragement, gave Rouſſeau a hundred piſtoles. The year following he brought out his Adonis, which met with the ſame fate; but M. de Francine, notwithſtanding the ill ſucceſs of theſe two unfortunate eſſays, had the generoſity to preſent the author with a thouſand livres. Yet Rouſſeau thought himſelf ill paid, and in revenge wrote the *Francinade*, a moſt virulent ſatire, which he printed

printed under the name of *Maſque de Luverne*, and in which he ſubſtituted the name of Mancine for that of Francine.* This alteration was made in the edition of Soleure, becauſe M. de Francine had the goodneſs to give twenty louis d'ors, at a collection which Madame de Bouzole made for Rouſſeau, when he had taken refuge in Switzerland. This remarkable fact is related in a journal printed at Amſterdam in 1736. Theſe journals are ſeldom much to be depended on, but of the truth of this I was an eye-witneſs.

Perceiving his operas had no ſucceſs, as indeed his genius was not ſuited to that kind of compoſition, he returned to comedy, and wrote *Le Capricieux*; but this piece was ſtill more unſucceſsful than his operas, and the author had himſelf the mortification to be hiſſed on his appearance at the theatre.

* Rouſſeau denies he had M. de Francine in view when he wrote that allegory. In fact, it contains nothing but general traits of character, which ſcarcely could be applied to that amateur. Rouſſeau alſo wrote, to M. de Breteuil, a letter which does him much honor, praying him to refuſe the money ſent for him by individuals. He would accept none but the preſents of the Duke of Orleans.

SECT. IV.

An Account of ſome famous Epigrams, and other poetical Pieces.

AT that time there was a coffee-houſe in Paris much frequented by the literati, philoſophers, muſicians, painters, and poets. M. de la Fontenelle went there ſometimes. M. de la Motte, M. Saurin, a celebrated geometrician; M. Danchet, a very indifferent poet, but a man of conſiderable learning and reſpectable character; the Abbé Alary, ſon of an apothecary of repute, and a young man of extenſive knowledge; M. Boindin, Attorney-General to the French treaſury; M. de la Faye, Captain in the guards, of the academy of ſciences; and his brother, who died, Secretary to the cabinet, a man of faſhion, and who wrote ſome agreeable verſes; the Sieur Roi, who diſplayed conſiderable talents in compoſing dances; the Sieur de Rochebrune, who wrote ſongs; and many more perſons of learning were there every day: all new works were criticiſed by them, and often with much ſeverity. They frequently wrote ſpirited epigrams and lively ſongs; in ſhort, it was the ſchool of wit; in which there was often no ſmall mixture of licentiouſneſs.

La Motte Houdart, after having from a weakneſs of mind, which certainly was ridiculous enough, remained a whole year at La Trape as a novice, returned to Paris. His genius for poetry began to appear. His firſt attempt was a ballet, entitled, l'Europe Galante, in 1697. He read it to Meſſrs. Boindin, Saurin, and La Faye the younger, who were good judges. They openly ſaid, Rouſſeau would be wiſe to renounce writing operas; ſince a poet had ariſen ſo much his ſuperior in that ſpecies of compoſition. From that time Rouſſeau began to hate La Motte. They afterwards both wrote odes, and this hatred increaſed. La Motte was extremely polite and engaging in his manner; I never knew any one more ſo. He had always ſomething agreeable to ſay, and poſſeſſed to a great degree, the art of acquiring friends and extending his reputation. His talents were fitted for every thing, but did not riſe above mediocrity, if we except a few odes. In the latter part of his life he became quite blind, but he was ſtill extremely amiable. Every body preferred his company to that of Rouſſeau. Indeed, one was not to be compared to the other, either for heart or head; for though Rouſſeau knew beſt how to write verſes in the ſtyle of Marot, or to turn an epigram, and had more of fire and harmony in his odes, he was very far

from that juſt and philoſophical way of thinking which diſtinguiſhed La Motte. Rouſſeau was much the beſt verſifier, but La Motte had moſt genius, for genius and verſification are two very different things. However, in 1700, the opera of Heſione was performed; the words were by *Danchet*, and the muſic by *Campra*, already known by the Europe Galante. This muſic was prodigiouſly ſucceſsful, and even ſome paſſages in the poetry had conſiderable merit, though the piece in general was badly written. Rouſſeau then wrote a ſong againſt Danchet, Campra, Pecour the dancer, and ſeveral others. This ſong was written to one of the airs in Heſione; the groundwork of ſeveral of thoſe parodies, which have ſince been ſo miſchievous. That I am now ſpeaking of ended as follows:

> Jack Ketch will ſoon, I firmly hope,
> Stop Berrin's hiſſing with his rope;
> While, at the ladder's foot, his Whip
> Shall make the dancing Pecour ſkip *.

Pecour was irritated, and accidentally met Rouſſeau in the Rue Caſſette. I was preſent at the time, and muſt ſay, that it is not entirely true (as has been aſſerted by the Bibliotheque

* The reader will perceive the neceſſity of reprinting theſe verſes.

Fran-

Françoiſe) that Pecour aſſaulted Rouſſeau. He would have done it had not I interfered. Rouſſeau aſked his pardon, and ſolemnly ſwore he was not the author of that ſong. Pecour would not believe him, and I parted them. From that time I broke off all connection with Rouſſeau, whoſe character I perceived was odious, though I could not but highly eſteem ſeveral of his works. I likewiſe no longer frequented the coffee-houſe, as I was tired of theſe quarrels among men of letters, and vexed to ſee them employ their wit to ſo bad a purpoſe. Danchet anſwered Rouſſeau in a ſevere parody, which was likewiſe on verſes from the opera of Heſione.

Thou timid enemy, thou dang'rous friend,
Ungrateful ſon, proceed, thy poiſons vend;
Veil with each hypocritic art,
Thy treach'rous and malignant heart;
And David now, Petronius now tranſlate:
Fearleſs, on all,
Eject thy gall,
Theophilus to imitate;
But, while his ſtile thou copieſt, dread his fate.

What Danchet ſaid in this ſong afterwards came to paſs; Rouſſeau underwent much greater mortifications than Theophilus: on which occaſion it was ſaid, Who would have ſuppoſed Danchet to have been a prophet?

Rouſ-

Rouſſeau continued to write more parodies on the verſes we have mentioned. They were for the moſt part aimed at ſome of thoſe who frequented the coffee houſe of the widow Laurent. He compoſed to the number of ſeventy-two †, which are ſtill preſerved by the curious. Thoſe whom he had attacked did not fail to repay him in the ſame coin. It was a war of wit, and the public were diverted at the expence of the combatants. M. de la Faye the younger, among others, wrote the following epigram, which was much admired.

T'other day, at Parnaſſus, a poet appeared,
Who by virulent ſatire had made himſelf feared;
On every one near him his venom he ſpit,
With no ſmall effrontery, and ſome little wit:
But old Clement came in, and, perceiving his own,
Made, without further ſcruple, the plagiariſt known;
After him honeſt Francis demanded a ſcore
Of his verſes, and Melin full as many more;
Till each poet reclaiming his ſenſe and his ſallies,
Nought remain'd of his works but their nonſenſe and malice.

† Among theſe ſeventy-two, it cannot be denied, but ſome were written by Rouſſeau, who very ſoon made an improper uſe of his talent for epigram; but his enemies likewiſe made an improper uſe of his name, by attributing to him things equally fooliſh and malevolent, which he neither did nor could write.

Rouſ-

Rouſſeau had need of a protector, and he found a ſpirited one in the perſon of the Duke de Noailles, who introduced him to court. M. de Chamillard gave him the place of ſuperintendant in a ſubordinate branch of the cuſtoms. He had the ſatisfaction to ſee one of his comedies acted in the preſence of the Ducheſs of Burgundy, by ſome of the principal nobility, and even ſeveral of the Princes of the Blood. This piece was *La Ceinture Magique*, and is not much ſuperior to his Coffee-Houſe. If the author had only written dramatic pieces, he would at preſent have been unknown, and probably more happy. A ſpirit of emulation and conteſt, with M. de la Motte, prompted him at that time to compoſe verſes both on ſacred and profane ſubjects; among which ſome are very excellent. He wrote his Epiſtle to the Muſes, and that to Marot, in which, among many prolix and unnatural paſſages, there are alſo many moſt beautiful. Happy, indeed, were theſe works, had they not been diſgraced by a virulence which muſt diſguſt all good men. Of his epigrams, likewiſe, ſeveral were excellent in their kind: ſuch, among others, was that againſt the Jeſuits.

It were to be wiſhed he had not diſhonored this talent, by the mad licentiouſneſs in which he indulged, in his epigrammatic compoſitions; which are often immoral, obſcene, and ſhocking. One would

would think it impoſſible for a perſon of taſte to verſify ſuch infamous ſubjects, ſo oppoſite to the firſt property of a good epigram, which is to excite innocent laughter. But theſe very infamies, which rendered him the object of deteſtation to people of reſpectable character, procured him the favour of libertines. He tranſlated the Pſalms, to pleaſe the Duke of Burgundy, who was a religious Prince, and wrote obſcene verſes to introduce himſelf to the feaſts of the Pariſian debauchees. One day, when the Duke of Burgundy reproved him for mixing in ſuch a manner ſacred things with profane, he replied, that his epigrams were the *Gloria Patri* to his Pſalms ‡.

The French academy having propoſed, in 1707, as a ſubject for the poetical prize, THE GLORY OF THE KING, SUPERIOR TO ALL EVENTS, La Motte and Rouſſeau wrote for the prize. Both were very ſecret, none of the judges knew the names of the candidates. La Motte deſerved and obtained it unanimouſly. His ode is very excellent, it is well known, and begins thus:

‡ It is not likely that Rouſſeau, who was not deſtitute of ſenſe, nor unacquainted with politeneſs, ever made ſo indecent an anſwer to the Duke of Burgundy. This reply was probably the bon-mot of ſome enemy, and it was afterwards thought laughable to attribute it to Rouſſeau himſelf.

Oh

Oh Truth! whoſe beauties never know
Reverſe or change, but, ſtill the ſame,
Alone can grant a laſting fame
To all th' applauſes we beſtow——

Two ſtanzas of Rouſſeau's ode ſtill remain, he never dared print more. The following is one:

In theſe illuſtrious deeds let France behold
The mighty monarch, whoſe propitious reign
So many victories ſaw. Let her that reign
Revere, which her firm ſeat of empire fixed
Glorious and immortal! He, high-minded,
Fortune led, triumphant, over the world:
Fortune, who, over him, could never triumph.

The other ſtanzas were very different from this. I remember hearing them repeated by the late De Brie. But though Rouſſeau was much inferior to La Motte in this ode, as well as in his operas, he was much ſuperior in his other odes, and will always be acknowledged the beſt poet.

Rouſſeau had been admitted a member of the Academy of Inſcriptions and Belles Lettres. This was a kind of noviciate, introductory to obtaining a place in the French Academy. He had procured his admiſſion through the intereſt of the Abbé Bignon, the profeſſed patron of letters; but

but had the misfortune to incur, almoſt at the ſame inſtant, the anger of the Abbé, and that of the Duke de Noailles. He wrote verſes againſt them preciſely at the time they were employed in doing him the moſt eſſential ſervice*. I know not whether the Duke de Noailles and the Abbé Bignon knew of theſe verſes, but I know M. de Longpierre ſhewed the Duke de Noailles a letter from Rouſſeau to M. d'Uſſé, full of ingratitude againſt, and laughing at, the Duke, his Benefactor.

M. d'Uſſé was a man of conſiderable merit and an admirer of the fine arts. He wrote a tragedy entitled Pelopea, which was never acted, though much eſteemed by the critics; and another named Coſroes, which he altered from Rotrou, and which was performed, though it was not equal to his Pelopea. He patronized Rouſſeau, and introduced him to the Marechal de Vauban, his father-in-law; but could not ſupport him againſt the reſentment of the Duke de Noailles. About the ſame time Rouſſeau affronted M. de Fontenelle, by ſeveral epigrams, which, though they poſſeſſed not ſufficient wit to entertain the public, were virulent enough to incenſe him whom they attacked.

* This aſſertion may very reaſonably be doubted, eſpecially as M. de Voltaire has produced no proof.

Thus

Thus circumſtanced, he ſolicited a place in the French academy, after having done all in his power to prevent his ſucceeding, and even having ſpoken with contempt of the academy itſelf. Indeed, it is remarkable, that almoſt all the men of wit have written epigrams againſt the French academy, and yet at the ſame time have intrigued to obtain admiſſion. M. de Voltaire is the only one who has never* ſatirized it, nor ever taken any ſtep to be admitted a member†.

M. de la Motte, author of ſeveral works then in repute, and who had no enemies, became likewiſe a candidate. Rouſſeau wrote verſes againſt La Motte, and decried him wherever he came.

* Never is a ſtrong expreſſion: to credit this aſſertion we muſt be unacquainted with theſe verſes, addreſſed by M. de Voltaire to the Abbé Chaulieu.

Dear Abbé, I again have ſent
The verſes you ſo kindly lent;
In their inſipid beauties we
Th' Academy, moſt potent, ſee:
How oppoſite to wit, and you,
That Pegaſus which never flew,
Beſtriding which, we ſee La Motte
Jog on, in cóld rhetoric trot;
Or Danchet, full as bad as he!
But let this reſt 'twixt you and me.

† The efforts made by M. de Voltaire to obtain a ſeat in the Academy will preſently be ſeen.

La

La Motte contented himſelf with addreſſing and laviſhing praiſe on each of the Academicians. It muſt be confeſſed La Motte's flatteries approached meanneſs; but Rouſſeau, with the moſt extravagant aſperity, attacked, at once, the Academicians, La Motte, and his friends. At length La Motte, loſing his patience, replied to Rouſſeau, in a very excellent ode on Perſonal Merit; in which are ſome expreſſions that prove his indignation to have overpowered the mildneſs of his diſpoſition.

This ode was highly applauded, at the coffee-houſe; and Rouſſeau, mortified and enraged to the greateſt degree, replied, by ſecretly diſtributing verſes againſt all who frequented the coffee-houſe, and eſpecially La Motte. The words of theſe lampoons cannot be repeated by any one who pays any regard to modeſty; they were in the ſtyle of the ſong we have already mentioned againſt Pecour and Campra, only containing expreſſions ſtill more cynical.

During this conteſt, ſo diſgraceful to the human underſtanding, a perſon of the name of Autreau, a man of much frankneſs, though an indifferent painter, and bad poet, wrote a ſong againſt Rouſſeau, which hurt him more than all the affronts he had experienced.

This

This ſong was in the ſtyle of thoſe uſually ſung on the *Pont-neuf*, and on that account much more irritating.

It was intended to have had it ſung on the *Pont-neuf*, and before the door of Rouſſeau, by the blind ballad ſingers of Paris: but La Motte, returning to the natural mildneſs of his character, reconciled himſelf to Rouſſeau, notwithſtanding the advice of Meſſrs. Fontenelle, Saurin and Boindin. What is not a little amuſing, is, that the reconciliation of theſe two poets, who had ſatirized each other, took place at the houſe of M. Deſtreaux.

At length, after the death of Thomas Corneille, and another Academician, La Motte obtained a place in the French academy, and Rouſſeau was rejected.

This refuſal incenſed Rouſſeau, and produced another ſong; which laſt proceeding excited an indignant emotion in Paris, which has ſeldom been equalled, and which ended in the utter ruin of a man whoſe talents would have done great honor to his country, had they heen employed to a better purpoſe.

This ſong, ſo abominable and ſo well known, contains fourteen ſtanzas againſt La Motte, Saurin, Boindin, La Faye, the Abbé de Bragelone, Crebillon, and in ſhort againſt all the friends of La Motte. Copies were privately ſent to all thoſe who

who were inſulted to exaſperate them. This happened about Eaſter, 1711.

One againſt whom theſe ſtanzas were principally levelled, was M. de la Faye, captain in the guards, an excellent geometrician, and a member of the academy of ſciences, who had lately married a very reſpectable woman, and the ſong reproached that lady with the moſt infamous actions, and the moſt ſhameful diſeaſes. M. de la Faye, one morning met Rouſſeau near the Palais Royal. He immediately ruſhed out of his ſedan chair, in which he was commonly carried, and caned him heartily. Rouſſeau took refuge in the Palais Royal, whither La Faye purſued and ſtill continued to beat him. Rouſſeau lodged an information againſt La Faye for having infringed the privileges of the Royal Palace; La Faye another againſt Rouſſeau, for being the author of ſcandalous libels, deſerving to be publicly burnt. M. de Contades, then major of the guards, became a mediator between the parties. Rouſſeau deſiſted from his proſecution for fifty louis, which La Faye agreed to pay, but of which in the end he was deprived.

He now perceived he was ruined in the opinion of the public, and was at once deſirous to free himſelf from the infamy of having been the author of theſe verſes, and to deſtroy one of his moſt inveterate enemies; who had openly declared

againſt him, in a tone ſo haughty and ſo contemptuous as to become almoſt as offenſive as the inſult he had received from M. de la Faye.

SECT. V.

Rousseau's Accuſation of Saurin, and his Baniſhment by an Arret of Parliament.

This enemy was Saurin, a man of a moſt inflexible character, one who entertained a very ill opinion of other men, and ſeldom ſcrupled openly to tell them ſo. He had been the occaſion of hindering Rouſſeau from coming to the coffee-houſe. He affected likewiſe a moſt rigid philoſophy, a great abhorrence of the character of Rouſſeau, and very little eſteem for his talents.

Rouſſeau imagined the character of Saurin, who had but few friends, would render his deſtruction eaſy. Beſides, Saurin had in his youth been a miniſter at Lauſanne, where he had been guilty of ſeveral offences of a public nature, on which account he had taken refuge in France and turned catholic, though he was rather ſuppoſed to be a free-thinker. Rouſſeau imagined, with no little reaſon, if he could once procure him to be arreſted, enough would eaſily be found in his papers to effect his ruin. Certain it is Rouſſeau acted like a madman; and his conduct is a ſufficient proof

proof that every ſucceſſive imprudent ſtep leads to ſtill greater folly; and every new crime to iniquity more confirmed.

He ſuborned a poor cobler, by name Arnould, to ſwear that Saurin had ſecretly given him the verſes to carry to the perſons againſt whom they were written.

When he had provided himſelf with this witneſs, he gained over to his party Madame Voiſin, wife to the miniſter for war, who was afterwards chancellor. That lady wrote to Le Compte, lieutenant of the police, deſiring him to ſupport Rouſſeau, and a decree was granted to arreſt Saurin, September 24, 1710. He was taken into cuſtody that very day, ſeized in the midſt of his ſeven children, and carried to the Chatelet, where he was immediately examined. His examination and croſs-examination were gone through with ſo much haſte and ſuch apparent partiality as might have terrified the moſt reſolute. This violent proceeding of the lieutenant of the police was ſeverely cenſured, even before the cauſe was decided, by the Chancellor de Pontchartrain, and the lieutenant himſelf received a reprimand ſo ſevere that he ſhed tears.

Though Saurin had no patron, all the enemies of Rouſſeau, that is to ſay, almoſt all the people of Paris, became his friends on this occaſion. M. de Fontenelle went to the priſon, and offered him his purſe,

purſe, and every one aſſiſted him and ſolicited in his behalf. What principally induced the minds of men to eſpouſe his cauſe, was, that he himſelf was outrageouſly attacked in thoſe very verſes which Rouſſeau accuſed him of having written; and he at once groaned under the abuſe ſo liberally beſtowed on him in the ſong, and the odium of being its author.

He drew up a factum, leſs to juſtify himſelf than thank the public for intereſting itſelf ſo much in his behalf. I do not believe there is any work of this kind more inſinuating or more truly eloquent.

I cannot underſtand why M. Rollin ſhould aſſert, in his *Traité des Etudes*, we have no pleadings worthy of being tranſmitted to poſterity; and that this is owing to the modeſty of our advocates, who never publiſh their factums. We have more than fifty pleadings printed, and above a thouſand factums; but there is not one comparable to that of M. Saurin. The effect it had cannot be conceived. I remember M. Gillard, one of the judges, cried out, on reading the paſſage I am going to cite, if Rouſſeau were here now, I would have him hanged without further ceremony. The following is what made ſo great an impreſſion on that judge:

" This I affirm cannot be the firſt attempt of " a depraved mind. He muſt have been long ha-

" bituated in wickedneſs who is capable of ſuch
" exceſſive villainy. But whom can we ſuppoſe
" more capable than a man who has diſowned his
" father from his infancy; who occaſioned his
" death by his ingratitude; who denied him the
" laſt duties of filial affection; who has ſlandered
" his maſters, his friends, and his benefactors, and
" who triumphs in his ſatires, his impudence,
" and his impiety? Who even carries his au-
" dacity ſo far as to aſk me—How I can deny hav-
" ing written the ſong in diſpute, when I have in
" my poſſeſſion ſo many epigrams?—Whereas
" theſe very epigrams, he reproaches me for pre-
" ſerving, are written by himſelf."

While this cauſe, which engaged the attention of all Paris, was carrying on, Rouſſeau appeared at the Chatelet. The people were ready to ſtone him. He was accompanied by one De Brie, againſt whom he had formerly written this virulent epigram:

Uſury and poetry, oh ſtrange! have lately made
A partnerſhip in trade!
The torment and the tranſport, they, we daily ſee,
Of that old Jew, De Brie.
He, at a ſtep, from ſtocks and cent. per cent. diſcount,
Can gain Parnaſſian mount:
But his next ſtep, if mercy not at mis'ry mocks,
Shall ſet him in the ſtocks.

It

It was indeed a moſt inſtructive ſcene to behold an accuſer appearing with no one to befriend him but the man he had injured; while the accuſed had a thouſand voices in his favor.

The twelfth of December, 1711, M. Saurin was ſet at liberty by the ſentence of the Chatelet, and permiſſion granted him to proceed againſt Rouſſeau and his witneſſes.

More than thirty perſons attended on him at his enlargement. He went the next day, in company with M. de la Motte Houdart, to dine with M. de Meſmes, the firſt preſident, and a proſecution was immediately commenced againſt Rouſſeau.

A writ was now iſſued to arreſt Rouſſeau, who thought it beſt to enſure his ſafety by concealment and flight. Madame de Ferioles, ſo diſtinguiſhed for her wit, afforded him an aſylum for ſome days, unknown to her huſband, who was too much actuated by the hatred the poet had univerſally excited, to have permitted him to have remained in his houſe; and when Rouſſeau expreſſed his fears of being diſcovered by him, Madame de Ferioles replied, "Fear nothing, put on a black wig inſtead of the light-coloured one you uſually wear, and place yourſelf beſide my huſband at ſupper; I will anſwer for it he will not know you." In fact, M. de Ferioles, wearied with the buſineſs of the day, ſeated himſelf at table without enquiring who was

his next neighbour. He ſupped three times with Rouſſeau, telling him continually he would hang him were he his judge, while Rouſſeau defended Rouſſeau, thus violently attacked, as well as he was able.

He left this retreat and went and ſought another at the Noviciate of the Jeſuits; imagining, if he could engage religion in his intereſt, he ſhould be ſafe. He addreſſed himſelf to Father Sanadon, who was then at the head of theſe devotional places of refuge, confeſſed himſelf to him, and ſolemnly proteſted he was not the author of any of thoſe libels with which he was charged. He requeſted he might be admitted to take the ſacrament, as he was ready to ſwear by the hoſt he was not guilty. But Father Sanadon did not think it right either to allow him to communicate, or ſuffer him to take ſo extraordinary an oath. This is a fact which I have heard Father Sanadon * aſſert, and of which ſeveral Jeſuits were informed.

At length, while this ſuit was depending, he fled from juſtice, and took refuge in Switzerland, at Soleure, with Comte du Luc, Ambaſſador from France, to whom he had letters of recommenda-

* It is no ways probable that Father Sanadon ſhould have revealed what paſſed at confeſſion, between him and one of his penitents.

tion

tion from Madame de Bouzoles, Madame de Ferioles, and ſeveral others.

The parliament having been informed of his flight, pronounced ſentence, April 7, 1712. Three of the members were for condemning him to the halter, the reſt ſentenced him to baniſhment; and an arret of coſts and damages, confiſcation and baniſhment was accordingly iſſued.

SECT. VI.

His Retreat into Switzerland. The Edition of his Works. His Journey to Vienna to Prince EUGENE.

THIS arret did not prevent the Comte du Luc from receiving Rouſſeau into his houſe at Soleure. He at firſt behaved himſelf with that prudence it might be expected he would learn from ſo many indiſcretions, crimes and misfortunes; but, at length, his natural bias was victorious, and he wrote verſes againſt a perſon in the family, who was a great favorite with the ſon of the Count. He was, however, ſtill patronized by the father, though he had drawn on himſelf the averſion of the ſon. While he remained here, he printed, at Soleure, a part of his works; containing ſeveral things, which, as I have already ſaid, are much eſteemed. I mean various of his pſalms, cantatas,

tas, and epigrams. He had the prudence not to print a pointed ode, which he had written at Paris, againſt one of his patroneſſes; but, as the reaſons which engaged him to ſuppreſs it no longer exiſt, I thought it might be agreeable to the reader to give it here.

Miſchievous Helen, ſay, what charms
Allure thy Paris to thy arms;
That, ſunk ſupine in ſloth and ſhame,
Gazing on thy bewitching eyes,
He thus conſents to ſacrifice
His former honors and his fame.

Why ſhould a dull inglorious eaſe
The hardy gallant warrior pleaſe?
Or why ſhould he who oft has ſhone
Like great Pelides clad in arms,
Reſemble through thy fatal charms
Achilles in diſguiſe alone?

Pleaſure and paſſion, fierce and ſtrong,
The heedleſs victim urge along,
While reaſon languiſhes in chains;
Love the Circæan chalice fills,
And, mindleſs of the latent ills,
He greedily the poiſon drains.

Such fruits produce thy am'rous wiles,
Thy treach'rous and pernicious ſmiles;
For ah! how poignant the diſgrace,
When the lew'd Syb'rites ſhameful airs
Conceal the honorable ſcars
That late adorn'd the ſoldier's face!

But

But ah! too ſoon ſhall he perceive
How theſe effeminate joys deceive;
  Shall own Love's garlands ſuit but ill
The warlike trumpet and the drum;
That Venus' myrtles ne'er become
  Hands which the palms of Mars ſhould fill.

Alas! thy Lover little knows
What this inſidious calm foreſhows:
  Nor dreams what ſtorms the ſurge ſhall ſweep.
How will he wiſh, when tempeſts tear
His ſhatter'd, ſhipwreck'd bark, he ne'er
  Had truſted the perfidious deep!

When winds, now huſh'd, ſhall angry riſe,
And gathering clouds involve the ſkies;
  When the offended God's decree
Shall change to black and horrid night,
Days which were ſcenes of ſuch delight,
  To puniſh blind credulity!

Ah! ſimple he who thus receives
Thy vows and thy falſe words believes!
  Unmindful ſtill how many more,
Like oaths, like vows, like artful ſmiles,
Like treach'rous and deſtructive wiles,
  Too often have deceiv'd before!

Already Love prepares the blow,
Which lays the wanton victim low!
  Already ſee the ſurges beat!
Enrag'd, he raves and execrates
The partial Gods and cruel Fates!
  His conſtancy and thy deceit!

Whilſt thou, inſulting o'er his pain,
With cruel ſcorn and cold diſdain,
Alike deſpiſing threats and tears,
Lur'ſt ſome new lover to thy arms,
Who knows not yet thy baneful charms,
Thy treach'rous ſmiles and wanton airs.

Many of the fugitive pieces he printed were not equal to this in ſtrength, but the good infinitely exceeded the bad. What was moſt blamed in this edition was the preface, in which he attacked, without reaſon, my colleague, M. de Freſni; a man of wit and abilities, and the author of ſeveral excellent comedies, who had been guilty of no other crime againſt Rouſſeau than that of publiſhing ſeveral of his fugitive pieces, in the *Mercure Galant.*

In this preface Rouſſeau gave himſelf out for a man of the world who wrote verſes for his amuſement, and became an author contrary to his intentions. "Theſe, ſays he, are the few works "which have given me the name of an author, "whether I wiſhed it or not." This vanity, it muſt be confeſſed, was intolerable in a man who had paſſed a part of his life in writing operas and comedies for ſubſiſtence. His deification of M. de Francine, in this preface, after having loaded him with the groſſeſt abuſe, in his Francinade, was perhaps ſtill more ſhameful. The reaſon

reaſon of this apotheoſis of M. de Francine, was, as I have already ſaid, a collection made in favor of Rouſſeau by Madame de Bouzoles, to which M. de Francine ſubſcribed twenty louis d'ors. I have read, in ſome journal, that young Voltaire alſo gave ſomething; which is very probable, for it is well known he always made a merit of aſſiſting men of letters. But to deify M. de Francine becauſe he had given him twenty louis, and to abuſe him becauſe the opera of Jaſon brought but a hundred piſtoles, were each equally abject.

Rouſſeau left M. de Luc, and went into the ſervice of Prince Eugene, in which he remained ſeveral years. It was expected he would have written the life of that great Prince; but, whether he was in want of memoirs, or felt he did not poſſeſs the ſame talents for proſe as for verſe, this hiſtory was never begun.

SECT. VII.

His Stay at Bruſſels; his Quarrel with VOLTAIRE.

FROM Vienna, Rouſſeau went to Bruſſels, in expectation of getting ſome employment from the Marquis de Prié, Governor of the Low Countries. But England was his moſt advantageous re-

reſource; for while he was in Holland, having paid his court to Lord Cadogan, who was then at the Hague, that nobleman took him to London, and procured him ſubſcriptions for an edition of his works. He returned from England with about five hundred guineas, but his verſes were not much to the taſte of that nation, and many who had ſubſcribed for them at two guineas ſold them again for one.

The reaſon of this indifference of the Engliſh to the poetry of Rouſſeau is, becauſe its merit conſiſts more in a choſen variety of expreſſions, and the richneſs of its rhimes, than in the thought. Beſides, whatever is written in the ſtyle of Marot requires a thorough knowledge of our language to be, I will not ſay reliſhed, but underſtood; and, laſtly, the greater part of Rouſſeau's writings perſonally regard himſelf; almoſt all his epiſtles have ſome relation to himſelf, or his enemies; ſubjects not very intereſting to Engiſh readers, and which muſt ſoon ceaſe to be ſo to poſterity.

When he returned to Bruſſels, he, as uſual, embroiled himſelf with his patron. Prince Eugene had manifeſtly had a coolneſs towards him for ſome time; on account of the complaints made againſt him by ſeveral perſons of diſtinction in France. But the real reaſon of Rouſſeau's diſgrace, with his patron, was occaſioned by his unhappy pro-

propenſity to ſatire, which he could never ſubdue. It ſeems as if certain men were inclined to certain faults, by the invincible influence of predeſtination.

When the Comte de Bonneval had that unfortunate quarrel with the Marquis de Prié, which, at laſt, cauſed an excellent officer to turn Mahometan, and take upon himſelf the command of the Turkiſh army: at the time of this diſagreement, I ſay, Bonneval made ſome verſes againſt Prince Eugene, and Rouſſeau had the criminal complaiſance to heighten the ſatire, and add ſeveral touches of his own. Prince Eugene knew it, but puniſhed him no farther than by depriving him of the annual ſalary he received, and refuſing him the employment he had promiſed him in the Netherlands.

Rouſſeau then went to Holland, where he was very ill received on account of an epigram againſt a Swiſs, equally reflecting on the Swiſs and the Dutch. The wit of this epigram, if it had any, lay in theſe two lines:

> The manners of a Swiſs, diguiſed;
> By Dutchmen tam'd and civilized.

The face of affairs at Bruſſels was conſiderably altered. The Marquis de Prié, Rouſſeau's enemy, was diſgraced, and the Flemiſh Netherlands were go-

governed by the Archdutcheſs. The Duke d'Aremberg, Prince of the empire, who reſided at Bruſſels, and was the friend of General Bonneval, protected Rouſſeau, and accommodated him with a retreat at Bruſſels, at the *petit Hotel d'Aremberg*; where he lived very agreeably, till a new quarrel drove him thence.

This quarrel was with M. de Voltaire; already well known by the only epic poem France can boaſt; by ſeveral tragedies, in a taſte entirely new, the greateſt part of which have met with much applauſe; by the hiſtory of Charles XII. better written perhaps than any other hiſtory in the French language; by a number of fugitive pieces which are well known to the curious; and, laſtly, by his book of the Newtonian Philoſophy, which he had long promiſed. I cannot poſitively ſay what was the occaſion of this ſo public animoſity between theſe two celebrated men. It very probably only aroſe from that unhappy jealouſy which commonly torments thoſe who aſpire to the ſame honors.

They have written againſt each other a kind of virulent *factums*, which have been printed in the *Bibliotheque Françoiſe*. Rouſſeau aſſerts, one of the grounds of this quarrel was, that his opponent had one day ſpoken againſt him with much vehemence in the preſence of the Duke d'Arem-

d'Aremberg. M. de Voltaire complained of this to the Prince, who anſwered, 'It was a ſhameful ſlander;' and was ſo offended, at ſuch a liberty being taken with his name by Rouſſeau, that he turned him out of his houſe. This fact is proved by a letter from the Duke d'Aremberg, to be found in the *Bibliotheque* for the year 1736.

Rouſſeau, about that time printed at Paris three new Epiſtles; the firſt addreſſed to Father Brumoy, the Jeſuit, on the ſubject of tragedy; the ſecond to Thalia, on comedy; and the third to the Sieur Rollin, profeſſor in the college of Beauvais, author of a much eſteemed work on the ſtudy of the Belles Lettres, and a compilation of ancient hiſtory, the firſt volumes of which were once in great repute.

Rouſſeau, in the firſt of theſe epiſtles, ſeems to have intended ſeveral poignant ſtrokes at his adverſary, M. de Voltaire. In the ſecond, he attacked all the writers of comedy, and pretended, that, ſince Moliere, we have had no comedy of any merit, in which he is certainly miſtaken; for, not to mention the inimitable comedies of *Le Joueur*, *Le Grondeur*, *L'Eſprit de Contradiction*, *Le Double Veuvage*, and *La Pupille*, we have had *Le Glorieux*, by M. des Touches, formerly ambaſſador to the court of London; and *Le Prejugé à-la-mode*, by M. de la Chauſſée, which are excellent works

works in their kind, and have been extremely well received, eſpecially *Le Glorieux*. With reſpect to tragedy, we ſhall not eaſily be brought to admit that *Manlius*, *Ariane*, *Electre*, *Rhadamiſte*, *Oedipe*, *Brutus*, *Zaïre*, *Alzire*, and *Maximien* are very indifferent pieces.

Theſe three epiſtles of Rouſſeau bear the marks of old age. A hard and ungraceful ſtyle, which characteriſes the declining genius of a writer advanced in years, is very viſible in them, notwithſtanding a few ſtrong and ſhining paſſages. What is worſe, while he was pretending to give rules to the theatre, he wrote a comedy, entitled, *Les Aïeux Chimeriques*, in the ſame ſtyle with *Le Caffé*, or, the Coffee-Houſe. This was in ſome ſort ſecond childhood. The comedy of *Les Aïeux Chimeriques*, ſoon dropt into oblivion, but the three epiſtles produced a new poetical war. A certain Abbé, named Guyot des Fontaines, who publiſhed a kind of Literay Gazette, and who was a writer extremely cenſorious, poſſeſſing conſiderable learning, but entirely devoid of delicacy or taſte, praiſed theſe new ſatires in an extravagant manner, and defended the ſevere criticiſms of Rouſſeau on all modern authors. Rouſſeau and Des Fontaines received ſeveral anſwers; but two pieces, attributed to M. de Voltaire, are eſteemed the moſt pointed and paſſionate. One of theſe is an

n Ode on Ingratitude, and the other a kind of Allegorical Tale. It is to be lamented, that ſuch a man as M. de Voltaire, who, 'till then, had enjoyed the reputation of never employing his talents to the confuſion of his enemies, ſhould ever have condeſcended to forfeit ſo glorious a character.

It is true, he thought himſelf ill-uſed by Rouſſeau, and ſtill more by Des Fontaines, who had the greateſt obligations to him, for he is ſaid to have been indebted to him for his life. He certainly took him out of the *Bicêtre*, where he was confined for ſome infamous crimes; and it is affirmed that Des Fontaines was afterwards author of a great number of libels againſt his benefactor; but it had undoubtedly been more noble, in the man who could write the Henriade, not to have deſcended to ſuch unworthy altercations.

However, we ſhall give the two pieces as we have received them; in which, we ſhall ſee the ſpirit of a man whoſe friendſhip is as warm as his enmity is violent.

THE CRISPINIAD.

The devil was drunk; the devil ſaid,
I've ta'en a frolick in my head!
I'll ſhape ſome animal, whoſe whole
Form and figure, body and ſoul,

Shall

Shall make the dulleſt vileſt elf
Exclaim, "Behold the devil himſelf!"
He ſpoke, and brimſtone took, and clay,
In Styx well ſteep'd, and work'd away;
And laugh'd, as, from th' enſulphur'd earth,
Each new deformity took birth.
And, firſt, a ſhapeleſs, pumpkin-head,
With briſtly, ſtinking hair, and red;
Carbuncles, huge, he next conven'd;
A front of braſs, to maſk the fiend;
With eye-brows white, and ſcant, and high;
A ſquinting, black, malicious eye,
Which Envy ſpoke, devoid of ſenſe;
A wide wry mouth; a noſe immenſe;
A grin ſardonian, that might fright
And make folks ſhudder at the ſight;
A ſpiral neck; an oval back,
So warp'd as to invite attack;
Thrown up, as 'twere in barricado,
Moſt proper for the baſtinado—
  Theſe he beſtow'd, and look'd and ſmil'd:
Like a fond father hugg'd the child,
And kiſs'd again, admir'd and mus'd,
And ſoon a trait'rous ſoul infus'd.
Go creep and cringe, and fawn and fear;
Go ſtab and flatter, ſmile and ſneer;
Gaul in thy heart, wind in thy head,
Be thou poſſeſs'd by me, he ſaid!
Go forth and rhime, thy poiſon expand,
I'il at thy elbow ready ſtand.
  Th' Excreſcence heard! his crowd he took,
And thrum'd, amain, from Rabelais' book!

And Marot's ſongs, diſcordant ſquall'd!
And magic girdles * quickly ſcrawl'd!
Loudly proclaim'd himſelf a Wit,
And old new nonſenſe daily writ!
His merit, ſoon, th' advantage gain'd
Of being hated, hiſs'd and can'd.
Expell'd, to hide his open ſhame,
He, next, a hypocrite became:
Laſt, to his fire, return'd again;
Where, with his fire, may he remain!
But, maſter Satan, you're a fool
To make a thing like this your tool!
Would you the world enſlave, deceive,
And make men worſhip and believe,
You ſhould aſſume ſome fairer form;
You'll beſt ſeduce when moſt you charm.
Beſides, the ſon you ſent from hell,
Betray'd by ſerving you too well.

ODE ON INGRATITUDE†.

Oh thou! my glory, my ſupport;
Whom, fondly, Memory loves to court,
Loves to recount thy precious ſtores;
The while Ingratitude forgets
Thy numerous gifts, her numerous debts,
And all th' exhauſtleſs good thy bounty pours,

* *La Ceinture Magique*, a comedy, written by Rouſſeau.

† The above copy is different from that found in Voltaire's own edition; there are three ſtanza's more in this, which he has inſerted in the Life of Rouſſeau. This poem is rather a collection of ſatirical ſtanzas than an ode.

Oh Friendſhip, faireſt child of heav'n!
To whom the Gods the pow'r have giv'n
To ſeize and faſcinate my heart!
Thy wond'rous impulſe ties of blood,
However dear, have ne'er withſtood!
Feeble to thee the flame ſuch ties impart!

Who is my father! who but he
Whoſe wiſdom, whoſe integrity,
Inſtructs my mind, my ſteps directs?
And who the black unnatural ſon?
Why he, to worſe than witchcraft won,
The wretch whom baſe ingratitue infects.

Monſters! to whom ſtern Nature ſaid,
" Of vileſt matter be ye made;
" Nor e'er my quick'ning powers know!
" But ſtrangers be your ſavage hearts
" To all the raptures Love imparts,
" And all the joys bleſt Friendſhip bids to flow!"

The Lion, with deſtructive force,
Bathing in blood his dreadful courſe,
Of Kings and Gods the ſymbol he!
The Serpent, though leſs dang'rous far,
For waging vile envenom'd war
Is held the hated type of Perfidy.

Such was that Plagiariſt, of note,
That Ape of d'Ouville and Marot,
By his deteſted Libels known.
He, like Locuſta, ſwell'd his fame,
As infamous in act as name;
Illuſtrious by his art of poiſoning grown.

What

What horrid vice, Rouſſeau, declare,
Thy guilty feet could firſt enſnare,
Avenging Juſtice thus could arm!
Ingratitude thee firſt betray'd,
And lo! in terror, came array'd
Legions of Sins and Crimes, thy ſoul to ſtorm!

Apollo heard, in dreadful ire!
And inſtant ſnatch'd the ſacred Lyre
From hands degen'rate, ſongs profane!
Expell'd the haunts of Man or Muſe,
A Reptile doom'd! in pois'nous dews,
Thy own diſgorge, thou'lt wallow and remain!

What new ſtrange Monſter meets my eyes!
From whom, abhorrent, Nature flies!
So hideous, ſhe may not endure!
In whoſe diſtorted features we
The whole mad Race of Zoilus ſee,
As obſtinate, as ſtupid, as impure?

'Tis Des Fontaines, the Prieſt, 'tis he!
From the Bicêtre juſt ſet free,
Who ſtrains Olympian heights to gain.
And can the crazy Critic hope
He ſhall be ſtrangled with a rope
Inwove with bays, ſtol'n from Parnaſſian plain?

For life and honor he returns
Rançour and rage, with theſe he burns;
Vile imitator of Rouſſeau:
More impudent, with much leſs art;
A feebler head, a fouler heart;
Equal in malice, but a meaner foe.

Far hence, where Superſtition low'rs
Amid Byzantium's pagan tow'rs,
  Macarty hopes to hide his ſhame:
While I, with tranquil eye, behold,
His loſs of honor, mine of gold;
  He ſtole my money, but he ſpar'd my name.

Not ſo the wretch who fears and hates,
Whom Envy enters and inflates,
  Who robs me of my dear Renown:
Such theft may well my wrath provoke,
May draw, with moſt unpitying ſtroke,
  The Herculean arm of Vengeance down.

Friendſhip forgive, that thus I deign
Theſe poiſon'd ſhafts dart back again;
  And, ſtooping thus, my hand defile:
Forgive that, from thy rapturous heights,
Thy converſe ſweet, thy bleſt delights,
  I could deſcend to things ſo very vile.

Virgil and Taſſo bade their ſong
Melodious thunder roll along,
  And up to heav'n's high portals mount;
Then, at a ſwoop, deſcend to hell,
Where Furies, Fiends, and Tortures dwell,
  And all her Monſters and her Crimes recount.

Rouſſeau had hoped that his epiſtle to Father Brumoy would gain the ſuffrages of all the Jeſuits, and that to Rollin the whole Janſeniſt party, by which means he might ſoon return to Paris, and

and receive his pardon. It was even ſaid, that a perſon of great fortune had engaged to diſcharge all the fines and expences incurred by the law-ſuit. To inſure ſucceſs, he wrote an ode in praiſe of Cardinal Fleury, on the ſubject of the peace. This ode, though no ways equal to his former odes, was very well received by the miniſter; but very ill by the public. Indeed, this peace ſeemed deſtined, by a kind of fatality, to produce very indifferent odes, if we except one by young Saurin, the ſon of him who had the famous trial with Rouſſeau.

M. Chauvelin, at that time keeper of the ſeals, was very much importuned to procure the return of one who had ſo long ſuffered puniſhment. The Sieur Hardion, formerly preceptor to M. Dupré de St. Maur, exerted himſelf very much in this affair. Yet all theſe endeavors were fruitleſs; Rouſſeau had ſhut every door by an allegory, entitled, The Judgment of Pluto, in which he had repreſented Pluto ordering an Attorney-General to be flayed, and a ſeat to be covered with his ſkin. The application was ſufficiently obvious. There is no Attorney-General who is willing to be flayed. The author had forgotten that excellent maxim that indicates, we ought not to write againſt thoſe who hold the pen of proſcription.

It

It was the more neceſſary for him to return to France, as he had no longer an aſylum left at Bruſſels, ſince he had loſt the favor of the Duke d'Aremberg. He reſided at the houſe of a banker whoſe name was Medine; he afterwards quarrelled with this banker in a moſt unpardonable manner. The following letter from M. Medine, to one of his correſpondents, will ſet this matter in a clearer light than any prolix relation.

A LETTER from M. MEDINE, againſt M. ROUSSEAU.

Bruſſels, Feb. 17, 1738.

You will be aſtoniſhed at the misfortune I have met with; I have had my bills proteſted, and am unable to take them up. I owe likewiſe ſome other trifling ſums. In ſhort on Wednesday evening, I was lodged in the priſon from which I now write. I hope, in a few days, to diſcharge all demands, and regain my liberty; but, would you believe it, that raſcal, that monſter Rouſſeau, who has eaten and drank at my expence for theſe ſix months, and whom I have frequently ſerved in the moſt eſſential manner, has been the cauſe of my being arreſted, and has perſuaded the holder of my bills, who did not intend to diſtreſs me, to proceed in this manner. In ſhort, this

this fiend incarnate, immediately after eating with me, drinking with me, embracing and kiſſing me, acted as a ſpy, and cauſed me to be ſeized at midnight in my own chamber. So black an action was never committed. I cannot think of it without horror. If you knew all I have done for him, and the obligations he has to me, in a word, how much he is indebted to me, you would ſhudder at his ingratitude. But I will be patient; our friendſhip, I am certain, will not be affected by this event. I ſhall, through life, continue what I always have been; that is your moſt faithful and affectionate friend,

MEDINE*.

This banker ſometime afterwards retrieved his affairs. Rouſſeau endeavored to obtain a reconciliation with him, but not being able to ſucceed he continued an outcaſt from ſociety, 'till an apoplexy, in the beginning of this preſent year, 1738, deprived him of the uſe of his limbs and his reaſon.

* This *Medine* was connected with M. de Voltaire, who had lent him money; we ought not therefore to believe him too readily in what he ſays againſt Rouſſeau. The crime of which the latter is accuſed would have been horrible; but an unfortunate man frequently entertains the moſt unjuſt ſuſpicions of his beſt friends. However, we muſt confeſs we are totally ignorant of this affair.

Such

Such was the life and deplorable end of a man who might have been happy had he curbed his pernicious inclinations. It is much to be wiſhed, that young perſons, who apply themſelves to the ſtudy of literature, may profit by his example. It will appear, from this ſhort hiſtory, what unhappy conſequences frequently flow from a talent for writing, and we ſhall find reaſon to conclude

Qui benè latuit benè vixit.

He died at Bruſſels, March, 17, 1741. The two following letters, as they relate to him, are here inſerted.

A LETTER from the Sieur SAURIN to Madame VOISIN.

MADAM,

THOUGH I have the misfortune not to be known at court, except by the ſhocking miſrepreſentations of my moſt inveterate enemy, nevertheleſs I have the confidence to caſt myſelf at your feet, and ſolicit your juſtice, even though you have granted your protection to my accuſer, of which he endeavors to make the moſt wicked uſe, by prejudicing my judges againſt me. For what may not the protection of a perſon of your rank, who join to the moſt cultivated underſtanding

ing the higheſt reputation for piety, effect againſt one of my low condition? What regret muſt you feel, Madam, ſhould you find this protection had only been employed to oppreſs the innocent! Yet, I will venture to affirm, with that confidence which the teſtimony of a good conſcience naturally inſpires, you are expoſed to this danger. The queſtion is not whether Rouſſeau ſhall be juſtified, and eſcape; but whether I am to be found guilty, and ruined. I leave it, Madam, to your prudence and piety to determine how far you are ſufficiently acquainted with me ſo as not to doubt but that I am a villain; and how far you may without ſcruple contribute by your influence to my deſtruction. We are all in the preſence of God the ſovereign judge, and in whoſe preſence all human grandeur vaniſhes; in his preſence, then, Madam, weigh what I here humbly offer. If thus enlightened you will examine by what ſteps, what artifices, what feigned tears you have been thus far engaged by my proſecutor, I dare expect, Madam, that a heart like yours, upright, generous, noble, overflowing with benevolence and religion, will wiſh to repair the wrong already done me; or, at leaſt, will induce you to withdraw your protection, in conſideration of the incertitude you at preſent are, with reſpect to me. You will one day, Madam, do more;

you

you will be provoked at having been impoſed upon, and will pity the misfortunes of a philoſopher and a mathematician, whoſe character and underſtanding were always far from poetical; who has been impriſoned for writing infamous verſes againſt his deareſt friends; nay, againſt himſelf; accuſed of being their author by the man to whom they are univerſally attributed; a poet by profeſſion, ſatirical and licentious, whoſe whole reputation is founded on the moſt virulent libels and epigrams, worthy of the flames, and which he does not bluſh to own. Such, Madam, and notoriouſly ſo, my accuſer is. The reſpect I bear the conſideration in which you hold him, and which he has ſurprized you into, will not permit me to ſay more. I am, Madam, with every ſentiment of profound veneration,

Yours, &c.

Dated at the Chatelet,
Oct. 8, 1710.

A LET-

A Letter from M. de Molin * to the Authors of the Bibliotheque Francoiſe.

Gentlemen,

I have juſt read the ninth article of your Journal for the year 1736, vol. xxiii, 1ſt part, page 133. I do not know whether M. de Voltaire, who has been long in the country, and is very ill, has ſeen it. I imagine not. But, Gentlemen, juſtice and gratitude oblige me to write in his defence, till he is ſufficiently recovered, to vindicate himſelf; and ſince you have publiſhed the accuſations of Rouſſeau, it is but juſt that you ſhould admit a reply.

The writer of the letter you have publiſhed, who furniſhed you with that of Rouſſeau, conceals his name. His reaſon is manifeſt. He is a ſlanderer. I avow my name, becauſe I aſſert nothing but the truth. I am unacquainted with the

* Molin was a corn merchant in Paris, who was connected with M. de Voltaire. He met with misfortunes in trade, and M. de Voltaire loſt 20,000 livres (800 pounds) by him; but, conſidering him as rather unfortunate than culpable, forgave him at the ſolicitation of M. d'Argental and the Abbé Mouſſinot. Some perſons of learning who have read this letter of Molin, have imagined they could diſcover in it the ſtyle of the poet, his friend.

ground

ground of the quarrel between the author of the Henriade, Charles XII, Alzire, Brutus, &c. and the author of certain odes, allegories, and epigrams. I could wiſh that all the learned were friends. I do not mean here to attack the Sieur Rouſſeau, but I think it may be proper to point out the difference between theſe two men, that the public may be the better able to judge.

Monſieur de Voltaire is of a very good family. He poſſeſſes property, and has relinquiſhed places he might have poſſeſſed, to apply himſelf entirely to the Belles Lettres. He has never employed his fortune but to the beſt purpoſes. I can teſtify that he has given up the profits of his works to his friends; and the Sieur Ledet, by whom they are printed, and who has announced a new and magnificent edition, may declare whether M. de Voltaire has ever required from him the leaſt gratuity. I can likewiſe bear witneſs, in the face of the world, that he has for a long time maintained and paid a certain ſalary to two young perſons, who cultivate the Belles Lettres. One of theſe breathed his laſt in my arms; his name was Le Fevre; and his relations, who are now in Paris, cannot diſpute the fact

I never knew him refuſe any thing to the application of any man of letters, in indigence, when his fortune was in a better condition than it

is

at preſent. He has lately loſt conſiderable ums, which loſſes have indeed no otherways af-ted him but as they have deprived him of the eans of continuing his benefactions.

He has preſented to the French comedians, who ed Alzire, the profits ariſing from that piece. ſides which, he has never paid his court to any e. I have known him viſited by the greateſt rſons in the kingdom, and what will appear ore ſurpriſing, conſulted by them concerning eir affairs. I have been witneſs of his negoci-ing the marriage of a Princeſs, and of the eſ-ntial ſervices he has rendered the family.

Such is the character he bears among all to whom is known. His company has always been eatly eſteemed, as he is poſſeſſed of the moſt gaging politeneſs and the moſt dignified man-ers. I know not wherefore the Sieur Rouſſeau as ſaid, that he has a diſagreeable countenance, nce, on the contrary, in his youth, his perſon as very pleaſing.

With reſpect to his writings, they are known all the world. There have been twenty edi-ons of the Henriade. His Hiſtory of Charles XII, rutus, and Zaïre, have been tranſlated into Itali-n, Engliſh, and German; and there is no doubt be entertained, but he is equally eſteemed in his

his own country, notwithſtanding ſome wou
wiſh to have us believe he is there deſpiſed.

You have been told his letters were bur
but I can aſure you they were not his, and I ha
the manuſcript ſtill by me, which is not any wa
ſimilar to the work attributed to M. de Voltaire.

You cannot but perceive, Gentlemen, that h
ſucceſſes have procured him many enemies; b
you likewiſe know, that the public ſeldom rega
authors in their own cauſe. I diſcover much rud
neſs and virulence in Rouſſeau's letter, but not t
leaſt ſhadow of truth. The jealouſy of the po
which mingles perſonal abuſe with frivolous cr
ticiſm, is ſufficiently conſpicuous. He reproach
the elegant author of Alzire, for having ma
amour rhime with *amour*.

This miſtake has crept into ſome copies of t
Paris edition, which I conducted; the true readi
is,

Tu t'aſſures ma foi, mon reſpect, mon retour,
Tous mes vœux, s'il en eſt qui tiennent lieu d'amour.

Thou haſt inſured my faith, reſpect, and vows,
If vows could e'er ſupply the place of love.

The printer has *mon amour* inſtead of *reto*
I reprimanded him for his careleſsneſs, and r
queſted the Sieur Ledet to correct the error.
is in page 57 of the Paris edition, act IV. Y
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may judge, by this unfair quotation, of the ſpirit which actuates M. Rouſſeau. I can aſſure you, whatever he has advanced againſt the moral character of M. de Voltaire is equally groundleſs. If you would take the trouble to read over again the admirable factum of M. Saurin againſt Rouſſeau, you would ſee, that he himſelf has been accuſed of all the enormities he now ſo unjuſtly imputes to M. de Voltaire. But the real character of both is well known, and it would be very unjuſt to permit one who has been diſgraced by the law, to caſt that diſgrace on another. I rely on your juſtice to publiſh this letter, ſince it contains nothing but the truth.

I have the honor to be,

Gentlemen,

Your moſt obedient humble ſervant,

DE MOLIN.

Paris, Aug. 26, 1736.

Having given this Hiſtory of M. DE VOLTAIRE'S Quarrel with M. ROUSSEAU, we muſt next relate the violent Conteſt he had with the ABBE DES FONTAINES.

THESE two writers were at firſt in the cloſeſt connexion. The Abbé des Fontaines always ſpoke of M. de Voltaire with enthuſiaſm. A criticiſm, though

though a mild and impartial one, on his tragedy of the Death of Cæſar, and a little pleaſantry on his Temple of Taſte, were magnified by M. de Voltaire into horrible inſtances of the blackeſt ingratitude: but, having complained to the Abbé des Fontaines, in a private letter, both of the criticiſm and the pleaſantry, he received all the ſatisfaction he could wiſh. With this he ſeemed perfectly contented, and wrote to the Abbé, in 1735, in the moſt affectionate terms. However, a fortnight after the date of this letter of amity and reconciliation, he attacked him in the *Mercure*. He was aſked the reaſon of this ſudden change, but he returned no anſwer, except by a number of epigrams, which he circulated againſt the Abbé.

After having inſulted him in verſe, he publiſhed, in 1738, a piece in proſe, entitled, the *Preſervative*, in which was this unfeeling letter:

" I had no acquaintance with the Abbé Guyot
" des Fontaines till M. Thiriot introduced him to
" me, in 1724, as a perſon who had formerly been
" a Jeſuit, and by conſequence a man of letters; I
" received him in a friendly manner, as I receive all
" thoſe who cultivate literature; but, about a fort-
" night after, was aſtoniſhed by the reception of
" a letter, dated from the *Bicêtre*, in which he was
" then confined. I learned, that, three months be-
" fore,

" fore, he had been in the Chatelet for the ſame
" offence, and that a regular proſecution was com-
" menced. I was then fortunate enough to poſ-
" ſeſs ſeveral powerful friends, of whom I have
" ſince been deprived by death: I made all poſ-
" ſible haſte to Fontainbleau, ſick as I was, and, by
" preſſing ſolicitations, obtained his enlargement
" and the diſcontinuation of a proſecution in which
" his life was at ſtake. I alſo obtained permiſſion
" for him to go into the country with M. Thiriot,
" to viſit my friend, the Preſident de Berniere. In
" what manner would you ſuppoſe he employed
" himſelf while there? In writing a libel againſt
" me. He even ſhewed it to M. Thiriot, who obliged
" him to throw it into the fire; he begged my par-
" don, telling me, it had been written ſome time
" before he was in the *Bicêtre*. I had the weakneſs
" to forgive him, and this weakneſs has gained me
" a mortal enemy, who has written anonymous
" letters to me, and ſent a ſcore of libels againſt
" me into Holland. Theſe, Sir, are a few of the
" things I have to alledge againſt him, &c."

That the Abbé des Fontaines was confined in the *Bicêtre*, in 1725, is very true. He was then concerned in the *Journal des Scavans*, but the learned world knows, that this was merely an atrocious contrivance of his enemies, to effect his ruin. M. de Voltaire has ſhewn the falſity and abſurdity of

the accuſation, in a Memoir written by himſelf. He wrote it at the requeſt of the Preſident de Berniere, who was related to the Abbé des Fontaines. After a fortnight's diſgrace, the Abbé des Fontaines was reſtored to ſociety and his literary occupations.

The Magiſtrate of the Police, ſorry to find he had been impoſed upon and made the inſtrument of ſo mean a revenge, juſtified the Abbé himſelf, not only to thoſe with whom he was immediately connected, but alſo by a letter, which he wrote to the Abbé Bignon, who then had the principal management of the Journal des Scavans. This letter was publicly read, in an aſſembly of all thoſe concerned in the Journal, and, conſequently, the Abbé des Fontaines was immediately re-inſtated in his employment, by the Abbé Bignon.

The firſt ſtep taken by the Abbé des Fontaines, was, to write to M. de Voltaire. " I ſhall never " forget (ſays he) the infinite obligations I have to " you. The goodneſs of your heart is ſuperior even " to your underſtanding; never was there a more " generous friend. How infinitely am I your debtor? To prove my gratitude ought to be the " employment of my life. The Abbé Nadal, the " Abbé de Pons, Danchet, Ferret, may triumph, " may treat me as I ſhall always treat their deſ- " picable writings. &c. &c."

It would have become a grateful mind never to have loſt ſight of a ſervice ſo eſſential, though it was unworthy M. de Voltaire to proclaim it on every occaſion. By continually renewing the remembrance of ſo diſagreeable an event, he could not but draw on himſelf all the indignation of the Abbé des Fontaines, who, in the firſt heat of his reſentment, brought forth the *Voltairomania*, a virulent ſatire, in which the Journaliſt reproaches his adverſary with every kind of literary impoſture, meanneſs, theft, extravagant inſolence, and with having deſervedly ſuffered the moſt mortifying humiliation, while he manifeſted, on every occaſion, equal pride, ignorance and a tendency to impiety, which nothing, however ſacred, could eſcape. Theſe perſonalities were odious; they might debaſe his enemy, but could not juſtify the Abbé des Fontaines.

This libel was ill written and entirely unworthy the pen of ſo formidable a critic: he therefore formally diſclaimed it, in a depoſition before a magiſtrate; in which he ſays, "I hereby declare I "am not the author of a libel, entitled Voltairoma-"nia. I totally diſavow it, and regard it as moſt "groundleſs and calumnious, with reſpect to the "pretended facts which it imputes to M. de Vol-"taire, and I ſhould think myſelf diſhonored "had I had the leaſt concern in its compoſition, as

" I poſſeſs all thoſe ſentiments of eſteem due to his " talents, and for which he is ſo juſtly honored by " the public."

Rouſſeau, who was attacked in the *Preſervative*, took part in this quarrel. He wrote epigrams to the end of his life, in which he was imitated by the Abbé des Fontaines, who never ceaſed to attack M. de Voltaire, though he concealed his cenſures under an appearance of praiſe, ingeniouſly equivocal. The Journaliſt was certainly a ſevere critic; he not only attacked the author of the Henriade, but a multitude of other writers, by whom he had never been offended.

When the Abbé Prevot publiſhed his tranſlation of the Familiar Epiſtles of Cicero, he made a preſent of a copy to the Abbé des Fontaines, who wrote back in anſwer, " I entertain a high opinion of your work, and ſhall inſert a proper extract from it. You muſt pardon me if I make a few critical remarks: Algiers would be famiſhed, were Algiers at peace with all the world."—Such principles could not but diſguſt all worthy men; he was therefore far from being generally eſteemed.

The Abbé endeavoring to juſtify himſelf before a magiſtrate, who entertained no very good opinion of him, the magiſtrate replied, " Should we regard what is alledged by all who are accuſed, none would be found guilty." And ſhould we regard

rd, anſwered the Abbé, what is alledged by all cuſers, none would be found innocent.

On another occaſion, however, he found a happy retort more difficult. A perſon, high in office, reproached him for being the author of ſo many ſatirical and abuſive writings. "My Lord, id the Abbé, I muſt live." "I do not ſee the neſſity of that," replied the miniſter coldly. This nſwer would admit of no repartee.

Theſe inſtances ſufficiently prove, there were ople who did not think favorably of the Abbé s Fontaines. He had made himſelf many implacable enemies; and this muſt ever be the lot thoſe whoſe daily buſineſs it is to attack vaty and wound ſelf-love.

e ſhall now ſpeak of the Steps taken by M. de VOLTAIRE, to procure Admiſſion into the French Academy, and of the Satires and Lawſuit occaſioned by that Admiſſion.

THE Philoſophical Letters, publiſhed in 1734, ere the beginning of the troubles which M. de oltaire experienced, from the extreme liberty ith which he thought and wrote. Being regard- by government as a dangerous man, and a arrant having been granted to apprehend him, the Parliament of Paris, he pretended to retire into

into England, but concealed himſelf at Cirei, an eſtate of the Marchioneſs du Chatelet, in Champagne, where he did not remain quiet long.

Le Mondaine, a ſatire, containing indecent alluſions to the principal perſonages of the Old Teſtament, was publiſhed in 1736.

The Abbé des Fontaines took care to ſhew this pleaſantry to a prieſt, named C—, who had conſiderable intereſt over Cardinal de Fleuri. The work was condemned as infamous, and the author obliged to fly his country. He would have been infallibly arreſted, if Madame du Chatelet had not concealed him from his purſuers. The King of Pruſſia offered him the ſame aſylum he afterwards accepted, but, at that time, he choſe rather to go to Holland till the ſtorm was diſperſed. His friends appeaſed the miniſter, and he returned to France.

Amid all his moſt involuntary perigrinations M. de Voltaire never entirely abandoned the hope of living quietly in France, at leaſt it is to be preſumed ſo, from the project he had formed of being admitted into the French academy, and thus procuring himſelf an honorable retreat.

Merope, which received the loudeſt applauſe of any of his works, was, as it were, the pledge of his reconciliation with the public, and the promiſe of future tranquillity. This tragedy was performed, February 26, 1743. The author has

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ſeldom been a ſpectator of the ſucceſs of his pieces, but was determined, this time, to gather the fruits of his genius, and, by going from box to box, ſhew himſelf to the houſe. As ſoon as he appeared the applauſe was redoubled, and he was proclaimed Academician by the public, who thus, as he had hoped, forwarded his views.

An imagination accuſtomed to heat itſelf, in ſo flattering a moment, muſt be incapable of reflection. The ſtratagem had ſucceeded. M. de Voltaire imagined, the enthuſiaſm of the pit had given him a right to ſolicit the Academicians. He paid his viſits, and was refuſed. Not but that many members of the academy acknowledged his right to a ſeat; but M. Boyer, Biſhop of Mirepoix, cauſed him to be rejected; either out of zeal for religion, or to make room for a prelate who was his friend.

The diſagreeable circumſtances which followed this ſtep of M. de Voltaire's, would have extinguiſhed ſuch a deſire in any other man, who had ſo little occaſion for academic diſtinctions, but he was not eaſily repulſed. A place becoming vacant, three years afterwards, he made a new effort to break thoſe barriers he had hitherto been unable to paſs.

He no doubt reflected on what had occaſioned his being repulſed before. It is well known he ſent

ſent a letter to Father de la Tour, principal of the college of Louis le Grand, which was an actual confeſſion of faith. He retracted thoſe works which had been the joint produce of impiety and madneſs, combated the opinions of the author of the *Nouvelles Eccleſiaſtiques*, and preſented himſelf, fortified with favorable atteſtations.

The academy forgot the paſt, hoped better things for the future, and received the proſelyte in 1746. Was any thing more neceſſary to make M. de Voltaire deſpiſe the impotent malice of thoſe who were determined to cenſure the choice of the academy? He might well contemn the ſally of the poet Piron; who, on the day when M. de Voltaire pronounced his diſcourſe, not being able to make his way through the numerous auditors, ſaid, "I find it is much eaſier to be admitted a member here than to get in." This was unjuſt; M. de Voltaire, to whom it was told, paid no regard to it. But he did not manifeſt the ſame indifference for the ſatirical pieces which appeared on this occaſion.

Of all the productions againſt M. de Voltaire, to which the jealouſy excited by his new dignity gave birth, there were two which irritated him more than any of the reſt. One was entitled, A Diſcourſe, pronounced at the door of the academy, to M. de Voltaire, by the Director; and the other, The Poetical Triumph

umph. Theſe were both printed on the ſame ſheet, and circulated all over Paris.

Voltaire determined to proportion his vengeance by the effect produced on his imagination, and applied to the Lieutenant of the Police for an order to arreſt the author of theſe two pieces, and thoſe who had been concerned in their ſale. The neceſſity of ſtopping the progreſs of defamation, which attacked the academy itſelf, and of repreſſing, by a ſevere example, the licentiouſneſs of thoſe numerous detractors, who ſeemed every day to grow bolder by impunity, and to inundate Paris with libels, were the motives M. de Voltaire enlarged on before the magiſtrate, to haſten the grant of the order he ſolicited, and which could not well be refuſed him, it being impoſſible to foreſee the uſe he ſhould make of this delegated power.

Having procured what was ſo neceſſary to the execution of his deſign, M. de Voltaire, the man who had ſo often drawn tears from crowded theatres, and who, by the univerſal pity he inſpired, ſeemed to have written the hiſtory of his own heart, became in an inſtant the reverſe of himſelf. Entirely given up to the impulſe of paſſion, the fury of which he had ſo often combated, he thought of nothing but finding ſome culprit

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on whom all the weight of juſtice or of vengeance might fall.

M. de Voltaire, having been informed, by a hawker, that Travenol, the ſon, violin player at the opera, had been concerned in the ſale of the two ſatires in queſtion, determined to have him ſeized. He employed an Exempt of the Police in this buſineſs, to whom he delivered his writ. The houſe of Travenol, the father, was immediately beſet by a crowd of archers. They endeavored, to no purpoſe, to ſeize the ſon; he was abſent. Deſpairing therefore to accompliſh their purpoſe, they determined to inflict, on the father, the puniſhment intended for the ſon. Neither the age of Travenol, his infirmities, nor his innocence itſelf could defend him from theſe men, who were the miniſters of the reſentment of M. de Voltaire.

In vain did he urge the rights of a citizen, in vain did he plead that guilt ought to be perſonal, and that the father ought not to ſuffer for crimes of which the ſon was accuſed. He was not heard. Inſenſible to his tears, they dragged him from his home, in a mercileſs manner; and this old man, having no protection but his irreproachable virtue, ſaw himſelf led, like a felon, through the midſt of an inſulting rabble, always greedy of ſuch exhibitions, to the priſon of *Fort l'Evéque*, where he was ſecretly confined.

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The impriſonment of Travenol was ſo violent and irregular, that this unfortunate old man, deſtitute as he was of ſupport or acquaintance with the Great, yet, found thoſe who remonſtrated in his behalf to the Lieutenant of the Police, and ſolicited his releaſe. In ſhort, ſome generous perſons, the friends of humanity, ſtrongly repreſented to that magiſtrate how much his order had been abuſed, and excited his compaſſion by deſcribing the manner in which the unfortunate Travenol was torn from his family, and dragged to priſon like a criminal. Their ſolicitations were not diſregarded. The Lieutenant of the Police enquired concerning the truth of what he was told, and the old man regained his liberty, after having been cloſely confined five or ſix days.

An outrage ſo atrocious, committed on the perſon of a citizen, under the very eyes of juſtice, expoſed M. de Voltaire to claims and conſequences proportionate to the violence of the injury.

Travenol, now at liberty, might reaſonably hope juſtice would take place, as his cauſe was connected with that of the Lieutenant of the Police, who was alſo intereſted to puniſh the abuſe that had been made of his authority.

But a much more important object engaged the attention of Travenol: for, informed, on his leaving priſon, that his ſon, who had been accuſed by

by M. de Voltaire of having facilitated the ſale of the ſatires, was ſtill hotly purſued, he determined to ſacrifice reſentment to his ſon's preſervation. He therefore immediately repaired to M. de Voltaire, claſped the knees of the man from whom he had a right to inſiſt on a reparation, and requeſted him to pardon his ſon, whoſe whole crime was having involuntarily incurred his diſpleaſure.

M. de Voltaire was ſoftened, embraced, wept over, and diſmiſſed him, with aſſurances that he would protect and ſerve both him and his ſon.

After theſe poſitive promiſes, Travenol thought it inconſiſtent with his reconciliation to inſiſt on any amends for the injury he had ſuſtained from M. de Voltaire. He conſidered what had paſſed between them as a kind of amneſty, in which he abandoned his right to any recompenſe for the wrongs he had received; while Voltaire, on his part, engaged to ſtop the proſecution againſt his ſon, for the pretended crime with which he was charged. The conditions of this treaty were certainly very unequal, ſince Travenol remitted a real injury to M. Voltaire, who, in return, only pardoned an imaginary offence; but Travenol conſidered it as an important advantage to extricate his ſon from his embarraſſment. Strange, however, as it may appear, M. de Voltaire, in contempt

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of his engagement, continued to perſecute the younger Travenol with more heat than ever. The father, conſequently, looked on himſelf as no longer bound by a treaty which could only remain valid while it was equally obſerved by both parties. Reſtored to his rights by theſe new acts of hoſtility, he held it his duty to put them in force.

On November 19, 1746, he therefore petitioned the court to be admitted a party in the ſuit pending between his ſon and M. de Voltaire, and concluded by declaring, it was at the inſtigation of the latter that he had been arreſted and impriſoned five days in Fort l'Evêque, by virtue of a pretended order from the Lieutenant of the Police. He laid his damages at 6000 livres, (250 pounds) beſides coſts of ſuit.

M. de Voltaire was condemned to pay, not 6000 livres, as had been demanded, but five hundred. What, however, was the moſt aggravating to him was, that ſeveral of the counſellors diverted their hearers at his expence. M. Mannori did not content himſelf with merely refuting the arguments in behalf of M. de Voltaire: he publiſhed his pleadings, which were ſold in every coffee-houſe. In theſe were contained the ſatirical lines that had occaſioned the proceedings, and which, though, before, only circulated by ſtealth, were now openly read by all Paris. This lawſuit may afford

afford an excellent leſſon for thoſe literati who have too great a ſhare of ſenſibility, and it is principally to warn them againſt reſenting every little injury that we have given ſo minute an account of this diſpute.

It is probable M. de Voltaire gained a ſeat in the academy ſo late (where he ſhould have been received at firſt, if regard were had only to abilities) principally becauſe they dreaded the impetuoſity of his temper. This was what Fontenelle told him, on his having a diſpute, a ſhort time after his admiſſion, with M. Danchet, a learned and reſpectable man. This Academician having maintained a contrary opinion to M. de Voltaire, was treated by the latter with conſiderable rudeneſs. M. de Fontenelle, offended at ſuch behavior, could not refrain from ſaying, "M. de Voltaire, you perfectly juſtify the repugnance we have always felt to admit you among us."

But things were greatly changed when he returned to Paris in 1778. The academy received him as the father of literature, and he held the ſceptre at every meeting. They loaded him with compliments and careſſes, which, for many reaſons, were certainly his due; for, independant of the various works with which he has enriched the theatre, and the republic of letters, there are, in his Commentaries on Corneille, and in his Miſcellanies,

cellanies, ſome excellent obſervations on the French language. He propoſed to have the Academy's Dictionary re-written, and found his own faculties ſufficiently vigorous to undertake the letter A, which is the moſt extenſive. He intended to have added, to that work, the true etymology of every word, its power, its different ſignifications, literal and figurative: as alſo the ſtrength or weakneſs of the correſpondent term in other languages; to have quoted authorities for the uſe of it from the beſt authors, to have ſhewn the extent allotted to it by them, and have pointed out whether it was moſt proper for poetry or proſe.

It is much to be lamented, a project ſo uſeful ſhould not have been put in execution, and that we have ſtill only imperfect dictionaries of a language which is in uſe, or at leaſt known, from the Straights of Gibraltar to the fartheſt extremities of Ruſſia.

M. de Voltaire at length grew diſſatisfied with France; the ſucceſs of his tragedy of Oreſtes had been very equivocal; the number of his critics and his enemies daily increaſed; death had deprived him of a lady who was at once his conſolation and his glory, the Marchioneſs du Chatelet; and the King of Pruſſia had long invited him to his court. About the year 1750, that monarch renewed his ſolicitations, and at length prevailed

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on M. de Voltaire to fix his reſidence at Berlin, with a penſion of 20,000 livres (800 pounds a year) and the title of Chamberlain. The poet was at firſt received with marks of the greateſt favor. The King of Pruſſia treated him as an intimate friend; but the more that Prince laviſhed his kindneſs on him, the more the author aſſumed an air of familiarity, which, though it may be excuſed in private, never fails to give offence in public. This was the firſt cauſe of the diſgrace of M. de Voltaire.

The ſecond was his quarrel with M. de Maupertuis. Theſe two celebrated men were at firſt the warmeſt of friends; M. de Maupertuis wrote to ſeveral with whom he correſponded: "Voltaire is a wonderful man; his moſt admi-" rable productions coſt him leſs trouble than the " indifferent works of other writers."

M. de Voltaire was the diſciple of M. de Maupertuis in the Newtonian philoſophy, and has praiſed his maſter with the higheſt enthuſiaſm. There are letters of his, ſtill extant, in which he writes in the ſtyle of a man who acknowledges his inferiority.

" I have juſt read, (ſays he in his letter to M. " de Maupertuis, dated May 22, 1738) your hiſ-" tory, and tract on natural philoſophy, which are " preferable to all the romances that ever were " written.

" written. Madame du Chatelet intends to read
" them; ſhe is more worthy of that honor than I
" am. However, while ſhe has the pleaſure of
" receiving inſtructions, I ſhall, at leaſt, have that
" of returning thanks

" Your preface appears to me extremely inge-
" nious, ſince it inſpires the reader with reſpect for
" the importance of the enterprize, and intereſts
" navigators, who otherwiſe concern themſelves
" but little about the figure of the earth. It pru-
" dently inſinuates the erroneouſneſs of former ad-
" meaſurements, and the accuracy of yours, and
" renders us impatient to follow you into Lapland.

" No ſooner have you conducted the reader
" thither, than he imagines himſelf in an inchant-
" ed country, where philoſophers are the fairies.

" The Argonauts who made a trading voyage
" into the Crimea, and who have been extolled into
" demi-gods, by boaſting Greece, were not to be
" compared, I will not ſay with the Clairaults, the
" Camuſes and the Monniers, but, even with the
" draughtſmen who accompanied you. If theſe
" have been deified, what ought to be your reward?
" I will tell you. The eſteem of all the learned,
" which will inſure you that of poſterity. Be-
" lieve me, the approbation of a few rational
" perſons, in the eighteenth century, is much
" more honorable than a Grecian apotheoſis.

" Awfully tranſported with you, I traverſe de-
" ſerts of ſnow, and climb mountains of ice. You
" certainly excel in deſcription, and, if you pleaſed,
" would be one of our greateſt poets, as you are
" our moſt accurate mathematician. If your cal-
" culations reſemble thoſe of Archimedes, and your
" courage that of Chriſtopher Columbus, your
" picture of the ſnows of Tornea has the ſtroke of
" Michael Angelo, and that of the different ſpecies
" of the Aurora Borealis diſcovers the hand of
" Albani.

" We have juſt learnt, from your letter, that
" your ſucceſs does not keep you at Paris, but that
' your ſenſibility has induced you to ſet out for
" St. Malo. Whence is it that you poſſeſs both
" a ſublime underſtanding and a feeling heart.

" I am informed a new edition of my wretched
" work is preparing for the preſs.—I have already
" corrected the miſtakes of the editor concerning
" light; but if you would beſtow an hour or two
" in correcting my errors, in that and other parti-
" culars, you would render me a ſervice never to
" be forgotten. I have ſo little time that I know
" not what to do firſt. The avidity of my book-
" ſellers is like a furious torrent, and I muſt en-
" treat your aſſiſtance, that it may not hurry me
" away. The moſt-reſpectable woman in Europe,
" and ſhe, perhaps, who is alone deſerving your
" company, adds her intreaties to mine.

" It

" It will not be much loſs of time, nor can it " indeed be loſing time, to inſtruct your diſciples. " Adieu; my heart aſſures me, my love and ad- " miration of you will end but with my life."

M. de Maupertuis received ſeveral letters full of like flattery. M. de Voltaire was, for a while, his friend; but, as he was his rival in literary reputation and the favor of his maſter, this good underſtanding did not laſt long. The quarrel had been predicted as ſoon as Voltaire ſet out from Paris, and the prediction was juſtified by the event.

The author of the Henriade took part in the diſpute which happened in 1752, concerning the leaſt quantity of action. M. de Maupertuis founded on it his demonſtration of the exiſtence of God. M. Koenig, profeſſor at Leyden, and an excellent mathematician, pretended that the principle of this demonſtration was to be found in the fragment of a letter by the learned Leibnitz. M. de Maupertuis required him to produce that letter, which was never done. The Academy of Berlin therefore declared this pretended paſſage, cited by Koenig, was undeſerving of credit.

This declaration ſeemed but to increaſe the conteſt, which was diſhonorable to both parties. The partizans of M. de Maupertuis maintained, that his proceedings, with reſpect to Koenig, were not

blameable, ſince his aſſertions were juſt, and he had a right to defend the thought as his own. His enemies, on the contrary, declared ſo much vehemence unbecoming ſo trifling a diſpute; that Koenig was a learned man, and a man of veracity, whoſe whole crime was, his having offended the vanity of M. de Maupertuis, and all his misfortune, that of not having the original letter he had quoted in his poſſeſſion. Poſterity may decide on the merits of this quarrel, but that each of the diſputants thought himſelf perfectly juſtifiable is certain.

M. de Voltaire engaged in this conteſt, and began by writing his 'Anſwer from an Academician of Berlin to an Academician of Paris,' which was ſtiled an infamous libel by an auguſt member of the academy. It was immediately followed by another pamphlet, ſtill more virulent, conſiſting of three diſtinct ſatirical pieces, in which there was no want of wit.

The title of the firſt was, "The Diatriba of Doctor Akakia, phyſician to the Pope." The ſecond, "The Decree of the Inquiſition." And the third, "The Judgment of the Profeſſors of the College of Wiſdom." Through theſe there are perpetual alluſions to the writings of Maupertuis, a continued ſtrain of irony and perſonality, and the moſt unfeeling ſarcaſms. Though it was far from being

being deſtitute of wit, it was nevertheleſs treated as a defamatory libel, and burnt by the common executioner in all the public places in Berlin, December 24, 1752.

The King of Pruſſia, enraged to ſee the preſident of his academy attacked with ſuch aſperity, accuſed M. de Voltaire with being the author of the Akakia. Accuſtomed to diſclaim his works, he proteſted, on his honor, that he had no hand in that ſatire; but the King confuted him, by producing the manuſcript of his ſecretary, which he had ordered to be ſeized at the printer's.

From that moment M. de Voltaire perceived himſelf ruined at the court of Berlin. He returned the King his enſign of the order of merit, and his chamberlain's key, with the following verſes:

Theſe gifts with affection I wore;
With anguiſh theſe gifts I reſtore:
And thus, while his boſom with jealouſy burns,
A lover his miſtreſs's portrait returns.

The King, touched with this act of ſubmiſſion, two hours after, ſent him back the tokens of his former kindneſs, and granted him a long conference, in which the poet, if he could not juſtify, at leaſt, excuſed himſelf.

Voltaire after this obtained another audience of the King, in which he requeſted permiſſion to go

to

to Plombieres for the benefit of the waters. His Majeſty granted his conſent, and made him promiſe to return. Voltaire's enemies, however, continued to circulate reports that might prejudice him in the opinion of that Prince. Maupertuis told the King, that he called the reviſion of his works, *waſhing his foul linen.* It was alſo inſinuated, to Frederick, that as ſoon as the French poet ſhould be out of his dominions, he would revenge himſelf by criticiſing his writings.

The King of Pruſſia, prevailed on by theſe repreſentations, wrote him the following letter, ſo often printed, and which we give here only to prove how much that Monarch had been incenſed againſt his favorite.

" You are at liberty to leave my ſervice whenever
" you pleaſe; but, before you go, let me requeſt
" you to return the contract of your engagement,
" the key, the croſs, and the volume of poetry with
" which I entruſted you. I could wiſh my works
" had only been expoſed to the critical obſervations
" of you and Koenig. I cannot regard the cenſures
" of thoſe who imagine they raiſe their own reputa-
" tion by ruining that of others. I have neither the
" madneſs nor vanity of certain authors. I look on
" the cabals of men of letters as the diſgrace of lite-
" rature, but do not the leſs eſteem thoſe who cul-
" tivat

" tivate learning with more liberal minds. My " contempt only falls on the leaders of parties."

March 16, 1753.

M. de Voltaire left Pruſſia after having received this mortifying letter; he went from Berlin to Leipſick, and from Leipſick to Gotha, where he met with the moſt flattering reception from the Duke and Dutcheſs. After paſſing a month at this court, he went to that of the Landgrave of Heſſe Caſſel, who received him in the ſame favorable manner.

At length he ſet out for Francfort, where he was arreſted by the magiſtrates at the deſire of the Pruſſian reſident. He was obliged to pledge his honor, and give a written promiſe not to abſent himſelf without permiſſion or ſatisfying the demands that had been made. Notwithſtanding this engagement, they were informed, much to their ſurprize, that he had ſuddenly left the place. He was immediately purſued, and brought back to the city under a guard of ten ſoldiers. The reaſon he gave for his departure was, that he intended to try the waters of Viſbaden.

The King of Pruſſia's motive for cauſing him to be arreſted, was to prevent his making an improper uſe of the volume of poetry he had in his poſſeſſion. On this occaſion M. de Voltaire made the following declaration, printed in the gazettes:

"I am

" I am dying. I proteſt before God and men,
" that, though I am no longer in the ſervice of his
" Pruſſian Majeſty, I am not the leſs attached to
" that Monarch, nor leſs ſubmiſſive to his com-
" mands for the ſhort time I have to live. He
" has arreſted me at Francfort for a volume of
" poetry, of which he had made me a preſent.
" I ſhall remain in priſon without complaining,
" until the book be brought back from Ham-
" bourg, where I have left it.

" I have given up, to the reſident of his Pruſſian
" Majeſty at Francfort, all the letters I had re-
" ceived from his maſter, and which I preſerved
" as the dear marks of the kindneſs with which
" I had been honored.

" He alſo required me to reſtore the agreement
" which he had been pleaſed to make with me: I
" am certainly willing to give it up, as well as
" any thing elſe, as ſoon as it can be found. This
" writing was not, properly ſpeaking, a contract,
" but merely an effect of the King's goodneſs, of
" no conſequence in itſelf, as it only contained
" my thanks for the penſion which his Pruſſian
" Majeſty had been pleaſed to beſtow upon me,
" with the permiſſion of the King, my maſter;
" and alſo for that which he had granted to my
" niece after my death, as well as for the croſs,
" and the key of chamberlain.

" The

" The King of Pruſſia had condeſcended to " write, at the bottom of this little inſtrument, as " nearly as I can remember, *I ſign this agree-* " *ment with the utmoſt ſatisfaction, which I have* " *wiſhed to enter into theſe fifteen years.* This " writing, which is abſolutely uſeleſs to his Ma- " jeſty, myſelf and the public, ſhall certainly be " returned, as ſoon as it can be found among my " other papers. I declare myſelf guilty of treaſon " towards the King of France, my maſter, and " the King of Pruſſia, if I do not reſtore it the " moment I find it.

" My niece, who attends me during my illneſs, " engages, in the moſt ſolemn manner, to return " it, if it ſhould be found by her."

Madame Denis, niece to M. de Voltaire, was arreſted with him; and this ſtroke was moſt ſenſibly felt by her uncle. " I imagine," ſaid he, in one of his letters to her, ſome time after, " that all " this is a dream, or that it happened in the time " of Dionyſius of Syracuſe. I aſk myſelf, whe- " ther it can poſſibly be true, that a French lady, " travelling with the paſſport of the King, ſhould " have been dragged through the ſtreets of Franc- " fort, by ſoldiers, and thrown into priſon, without " any form of law, or without her ſervant being " permitted to attend her, while four ſoldiers, with " their bayonets fixed, kept guard at the door, and

one

" one Freytag, a clerk, the vileſt of raſcals, paſſed
" the night in her chamber? When La Brinvilliers
" was arreſted, the executioner was never left alone
" with her. There is no example extant of ſuch in-
" decent barbarity. And what was your crime?
" That you had made a journey of two hundred
" leagues, to accompany a dying uncle, whom you
" conſider as your father, to the waters of Plom-
" bieres. It is indeed to be lamented, that the
" King of Pruſſia ſhould never have atoned for
" ſuch an injury, committed in his name, by one
" who ſtiled himſelf his reſident.

" With reſpect to myſelf, he had cauſed me to be
" arreſted for having in my poſſeſſion a printed vo-
" lume of his poetry, of which he had made me a
" preſent, and to which I had ſome kind of right.
" He had beſtowed it on me as a pledge of his
" goodneſs, and the reward of my care. He has
" wiſhed to receive back his preſent; he had only
" to ſpeak the word. It was not worth while to
" impriſon an old man, who was going to take the
" benefit of the waters.

" He might have remembered, that, for more
" than 17 years, he had honored me with the moſt
" flattering marks of his eſteem, and induced me,
" in my old age, to leave my country; that I had
" labored two ſucceſſive years for his improve-
" ment; that I have faithfully ſerved him, and ne-

" ver

" ver any way been deficient in my duty; that, in " ſhort, it is much beneath his rank and his glory to " take part in an academical quarrel, and to con- " clude his favors by ſending ſoldiers to demand " back his poetry. I hope he will ſometime diſ- " cover, that he has gone too far, and been de- " ceived by my enemies, and that neither the au- " thor nor the King ought to have rendered the " cloſe of my life ſo wretched.

" He has liſtened only to paſſion; he will one " day liſten to reaſon and benevolence."

In 1757 this prediction was actually fulfilled. The Margraveſs of Bareith, who greatly eſteemed M. de Voltaire and Madame Denis, was the means of renewing the literary correſpondence between the Hero of Brandenbourg, her brother, and the French poet. The Prince wrote to him ſeveral times to invite him again into his dominions, but Voltaire always replied, " I can neither live with " you nor without you."

M. de Voltaire, on leaving Berlin, in 1753, ſtopped for ſome time at Leipzic, where he amuſed himſelf with continuing to ridicule M. de Maupertuis. The latter, much hurt at his ſatire, wrote him word he was determined to take the moſt ample revenge. M. de Voltaire made no other reply, but that of publiſhing a continuation to his Doctor Akakia, which is not to be found in the laſt

laſt editions of this piece. It may, therefore, not be improper to inſert it here, as it contains ſeveral curious particulars.

" He ſays, that the native of St. Maloes, (Mau-
" pertuis) having been again attacked by his
" frenzy, had vented his ravings againſt his good
" phyſician, Akakia, who was then ill at the city of
" Leipzic in Germany, and had written him a
" menacing letter, in which he threatened to
" come and murder him.

" Since the days of M. de Pourceaugnac, who
" wanted to viſit his phyſician ſword in hand, ſo
" malicious a patient was never known. Doctor
" Akakia, being alarmed, preſented the following
" Petition to the Univerſity of Leipzic.

' The Petition of Dr. Akakia.

' Doctor Akakia having fled for protection
' to the univerſity of Leipzic, where he has ſought
' an aſylum from the attempts of a Laplander, a
' native of St. Maloes, who has declared he will
' murder him, in the midſt of the univerſity, earneſt-
' ly entreats the doctors and ſcholars to arm them-
' ſelves againſt that barbarian with their penknives
' and ink-ſtands; and particularly requeſts his bre-
' thren, the phyſicians, to adminiſter a purge to the
' ſaid ſavage, the moment he appears, in order that he
' may

'may evacuate all his peccant humors, and that 'they may preſerve, by their art, the little rea-'ſon ſtill poſſeſſed by this cruel Laplander, and 'the life of their good brother Akakia, who re-'commends himſelf to their protection. He like-'wiſe entreats the apothecaries not to forget 'themſelves on this occaſion.'

" In conſequence of this petition, the univerſity " iſſued a decree to arreſt the native of St. Ma-" loes, at the gates of the city, as ſoon as he " ſhould arrive to perpetrate his parricide on the " good Akakia, who had behaved to him like a " father. The following is the order of the uni-" verſity, and is ſtill to be ſeen in the *Acta Eru-" ditorum.*

" A *Quidam* having written a letter to an inha-" bitant of Leipſic, in which he threatens to mur-" der the ſaid inhabitant; and as the murdering " of any perſon is manifeſtly contrary to the pri-" vileges of the fair; this is to requeſt all and every " one to give information againſt the ſaid *Quidam*, " the moment he ſhall preſent himſelf at the gates " of Leipſic. He is a philoſopher, whoſe gait is " in the compound ratio of abſent and precipitate; " his eyes are round and ſmall, his peruke the ſame; " his noſe cruſhed flat, he has an ill look, a full " face, and a full head; that is to ſay, full of " himſelf; he always carries a ſcalpel in his

" pocket

" pocket to diſſect tall people. Whoever will
" give information, concerning him, ſhall receive
" a thouſand ducats reward, to be paid at the
" Latin City, building by the ſaid *Quidam*, or out
" of the comet of gold and diamonds which is
" ſoon to fall on the earth, according to the pre-
" diction of the ſaid *Quidam*, philoſopher and
" aſſaſſin."

When Voltaire received the letter of Maupertuis, containing a challenge, the phyſician, Akakia, did not fail to return an anſwer. He even endeavored to reſtore him to reaſon by the following moſt conciliatory epiſtle.

" LETTER from Doctor AKAKIA to the Native of St. Maloes.

" Mr. PRESIDENT,

" I HAVE received the letter with which you
" honored me. You inform me that you are in
" good health, that you have compleatly reco-
" vered your ſtrength, and you threaten to come
" and murder me, if I publiſh the letter of La
" Beaumelle. What ingratitude towards your
" poor phyſician Akakia! You are not content-
" ed with not paying him, but are determined
" to be his aſſaſſin. Such a proceeding is unbe-
" coming the preſident of an academy, and a

" good

" good chriſtian, as you are. Permit me to con-
" gratulate you on the return of your health,
" but I have not ſo much ſtrength as you: I
" have kept my bed this fortnight, and there-
" fore muſt entreat you to defer the philoſophi-
" cal experiment you are ſo deſirous of making.
" Perhaps you mean to diſſect me, but conſider
" I am not a giant from Terra Auſtralis, and
" that my brain is ſo ſmall you can acquire no
" new ideas, on the nature of the ſoul, from an
" examination of its fibres. Beſides, if you kill
" me, be ſo good as to remember that M. de la
" Beaumelle has promiſed he will purſue me to
" hell. He will not fail to go thither after me,
" for though the hole, which is to be bored, by
" your order, to the center of the earth, and
" which muſt lead ſtraight down to hell, be not
" yet begun, there are other methods of getting
" thither. And he will take care that I ſhall ſuffer
" as much ill treatment in the other world as I
" have experienced perſecution from you in this.
" Can you think of carrying your animoſity
" ſo far? Have the goodneſs moreover to con-
" ſider another particular—If you can but heat
" your imagination juſt ſufficient to peep into fu-
" turity, you muſt perceive that if you come to
" murder me at Leipſic, where you are not more
" beloved than any where elſe, and where your
" letter

" letter is depoſited, you will run a riſk of being
" hanged, which would too much haſten the
" moment of your maturity, and be quite unbe-
" coming the preſident of an academy. I would
" therefore adviſe you immediately to declare
" the letter of La Beaumelle a forgery, and an
" attack on your reputation, at one of your aca-
" demical meetings, after which you will per-
" haps be allowed to condemn me as the diſ-
" turber of your vanity.

" I am ſtill very weak; you will find me in
" bed, and only able to throw my ſyringe or my
" chamber-pot at your head; but, as ſoon as I
" get a little ſtrength, I will charge my piſtols,
" *cum pulvere pyrio*, and multiplying the maſs by
" the ſquare of the velocity, till the action and
" you are both reduced to a cypher, will lodge
" ſome lead in your brain, of which it appears
" to ſtand in great need.

" It is a ſad thing for you, that the Germans,
" whom you have ſo much deſpiſed, ſhould have
" invented gunpowder; and you ought equally
" to lament that they have diſcovered the art of
" printing.

" Adieu, my dear Preſident,

" AKAKIA.

" P. S.

" P. S. As we have here fifty or ſixty per-
" ſons who have ridiculed you prodigiouſly, they
" beg leave to enquire what day you intend to
" murder them all."

" It was hoped this laſt cordial would have
" had ſo good an effect on the acrimonious ſpirit
" of the native of St. Maloes, that he would
" have deſiſted from his cruel experiments, that
" he would no longer have perſecuted the Swiſs
" nor the Akakias, that he would have left the
" Germans in peace, and that, hereafter, when
" his health ſhould be perfectly re-eſtabliſhed, he
" might even have laughed at the ſymptoms of his
" malady.

" But the phyſician, Akakia, like a prudent
" man, was deſirous not to hurt the delicacy of
" the native of St. Maloes, and, humbly ad-
" dreſſing himſelf to the Eternal Secretary of the
" Eternal Academy, wrote to him thus:

" To the ETERNAL SECRETARY.

" I SEND you, Sir, the ſentence of death
" pronounced againſt me by the Preſident, with
" my appeal to the public, and the certificates
" of protection granted me by all the phyſicians
" and apothecaries of Leipſic. You ſee, Sir, the
" Preſident does not confine the experiments he

" has projected to make on the giants of Terra
" Auſtralis to them alone, but that he is abſolutely
" determined to ſeparate my ſoul from my body in
" theſe northern climates; this is the firſt time that
" a Preſident of an academy has wiſhed to murder
" one of his counſellors. Is that the principle
" of the leaſt action? What a terrible man is
" this Preſident? On his left hand he pronounces
" one man guilty of forgery, aſſaſſinates another
" on his right, and proves there is a God by A
" *plus* B *divided* by Z. His *equal* has certainly
" never been ſeen. I cannot help reflecting, Sir,
" that when the Preſident ſhall have killed, diſ-
" ſected, and buried me, it will be neceſſary to
" read my eulogium according to laudable cuſ-
" tom. If he is choſen to perform this, he will
" be ſomewhat embarraſſed; as he was known
" to be in the caſe of the late Marechal de
" Schmettau, whom he had not uſed very well
" while living. Should you be appointed to
" pronounce my Funeral Oration, you too will
" find ſome difficulties. You are a prieſt and
" holy. I have no ſuch holineſs. You are a
" Calviniſt, I a Papiſt; you are an author, and
" ſo am I; you are in good health, and I am a
" phyſician. Thus, Sir, to avoid a funeral ora-
" tion, and leave every one at his eaſe, ſuffer
" me to die by the cruel hand of the Preſident,

" and

" and eraſe me from the number of your elect.
" You cannot but be ſenſible, likewiſe, that as I
" am condemned to death by his ſentence, I
" ought to be firſt degraded; ſtrike me therefore
" ought of your liſt, and place me with the falſi-
" fier Koenig, who has had the misfortune to
" have reaſon on his ſide. I ſhall patiently expect
" death along with this criminal.

" *Pariterque cedentes ignovere Diis.*

" I am, Sir, metaphyſically,
" Your moſt humble
" And moſt obedient ſervant,

" AKAKIA."

It will now be neceſſary to ſpeak of the literati who took part in the quarrel between M. de Maupertuis and M. de Voltaire.

Several writers ſhared in the danger and glory of this quarrel; but no one took a more diſtinguiſhed part in it than La Beaumelle, who was then very young. He was returning from Copenhagen, and ſtopped ſometime at Berlin, where his firſt care was to pay a viſit to M. de Voltaire.

" I had no knowledge of him (ſays La Beau-
" melle) but by his works, and ſome letters he had
" written to Copenhagen, where I was Royal
" Profeſſor of the French Belles Lettres, and, in

 " right

" right of that, Counſellor to the Eccleſiaſtical
" Conſiſtory. The ſubject of theſe letters was
" an edition of the French claſſic authors, which
" I had projected for the uſe of the Prince Royal
" of Denmark. Lord Tyrconnel, our Miniſter,
" to whom I addreſſed myſelf on this occaſion,
" told me, I ought to flatter M. de Voltaire, be-
" cauſe he was a dangerous, and attach myſelf to
" M. de Maupertuis, becauſe he was a worthy,
" man; and, perhaps, the only Frenchman whom
" the King of Pruſſia really eſteemed.

" I did not follow this advice; the ſtudies of
" M. de Maupertuis lying in a different line from
" thoſe I had proſecuted. I alſo thought paſſion
" ſeemed to influence Lord Tyrconnel, in the con-
" tempt he teſtified for M. de Voltaire. That
" poet was then at Potſdam. I informed him of
" my arrival, telling him, that the deſire of ſee-
" ing three great men had brought me into
" Pruſſia; and, though he was only the ſecond,
" I would nevertheleſs ſee him firſt.

" I went to Potſdam, on the 14th of Novem-
" ber, 1751, and only ſaw M. de Voltaire, with
" whom I remained four hours, he having done
" me the honor to invite me to dine with him.
" He aſked me a great many queſtions, and ſome
" very improper ones. The tendency of moſt of
" them was to diſcover whether I had any deſign

" on the place of La Metrie, who was lately
" dead; but, as my buſineſs was of another nature,
" and as this viſit was to pay him my reſpects,
" and not to make him my confident, my an-
" ſwers only gave him to underſtand he would
" not be able to penetrate my intentions.

" He aſked me, who the other two great men
" were, whom I came to ſee. I told him, one of
" them was the King. Oh, replied he, it is not
" ſo eaſy to gain admittance to the reverend Fa-
" ther Abbot. And who might be the third?
" M. de Maupertuis. He gave a ſarcaſtic ſmile,
" and I thought I could perceive he would rather
" I had anſwered, M. Peloutier; the author of an
" excellent Hiſtory of the Celts.

" He diſcourſed with me concerning his Age
" of Louis XIV. and I ſpoke of my Letters of Ma-
" dame de Maintenon. He deſired to ſee them,
" but recollecting that a manuſcript of Sevigné's
" Letters, which Thirlot had lent him, had ſoon
" after been printed at Troyes, I refuſed mine
" with as much politeneſs as if I had not remem-
" bered that anecdote. He replied very abruptly
" to my refuſal, *and who aſks them of you.*

" I endeavored to atone, but I perceived my
" efforts had little effect. Knowing he was ex-
" travagantly fond of praiſe, I made continual
" efforts at flattery; but in this my aukward mo-

" deſty

" deſty ſuffered me to have but little ſucceſs. I
" have not ſufficient effrontery perſonally to praiſe
" either thoſe I eſteem or thoſe I deſpiſe.

" I left Potſdam too much diſſatisfied with
" M. de Voltaire not to be diſſatisfied with myſelf.
" I had been alarmed at the perfidy of his ſmile,
" the inequality of his temper, the rudeneſs of
" his manner, and the harſhneſs of his character.
" But inclined to pardon every thing in M. de
" Voltaire, I ſaid to myſelf, I have viſited this
" man on an improper day, he has had an indi-
" geſtion which has rendered him deceitful, ſe-
" vere, and unfeeling. What pity that the ſoul
" ſhould depend ſo much on the operations of
" the ſtomach!

" On the firſt of December I received a letter
" from him, in which he told me, I ſhould
" highly oblige him if I would lend him *My*
" *Thoughts*, a work of mine, of which he had heard
" a great character. I long heſitated. This work
" was not common at Berlin. I did not wiſh to
" make myſelf known there by a book, though
" I knew books of very little merit had made
" the fortunes of their authors. In it I had praiſed
" the King of Pruſſia, and did not deſire my
" praiſes ſhould be thought intereſted. It was
" ſufficient that theſe excluſive praiſes had cauſed
" ſome jealouſy at Copenhagen, and I thought

"

" it beneath me to make a merit in Pruſſia of what " had been conſidered as a crime in Denmark.

" Madame de ** at length determined me. " I ſent my book to M. de Voltaire, with a let- " ter, in which I contradicted, in the ſtrongeſt " terms, the report he had circulated, that I " wiſhed to ſucceed La Metrie.

" He returned it in three days by his valet de " chambre, but without writing to me. The " 70th page was marked, it contained the fol- " lowing words:

" Let us examine all hiſtory, ancient or mo- ' dern, we ſhall find no example of a Prince ' having given a penſion of ſeven thouſand ' crowns to a man of letters, merely becauſe he ' was ſuch. There have been greater poets than ' Voltaire, but never any ſo well rewarded, be- ' cauſe true taſte ſets no bounds to its gifts. ' The King of Pruſſia heaps favors on men of ' abilities, preciſely for the ſame reaſons which ' induce a petty Prince of Germany to heap fa- ' vors on a buffoon or a dwarf.'

" The 7th of December the King came from " Berlin to Potſdam, and with him came M. de " Voltaire. I paid him another viſit; he men- " tioned my book, and with great aſperity made " many ſevere and judicious remarks, with which, " at the time, I was far from being pleaſed,

" but

" but by which I have ſince greatly profited.
" He ſaid, he could not have believed that my
" haſte to enter on my project of the claſſics,
" at Copenhagen, could have induced me to treat
" him ſo ill as I had done in that book.

" Surprized at this reproach, I aſked, what
" had given him offence. He quoted, after his
" manner, the paſſage I have juſt cited. I re-
" peated it literally ſeveral times, aſſerting, it
" redounded to his glory, and ſtill more to that
" of the King. Then, replied he, I know not
" what I read. Perhaps not, at this moment,
" anſwered I, for it is moſt certain I have nei-
" ther really offended, nor intended to offend.
" I explained the paſſage a thouſand different
" ways, but could not make him underſtand it
" in the only ſenſe in which it could poſſibly
" be underſtood.

" However, aſhamed, no doubt, of ſo much
" equivocation, he, at laſt, fixed on the phraſe,
' There never was any poet ſo well rewarded as
' Voltaire.'——He told me, " that what the
" King gave him was not a reward, but an in-
" demnification only, and added, in ſo many
" words, you have certainly ſuppoſed me a poor
" man. I replied, I knew him to be very rich,
" but that it was not his wealth which rendered
" him ſo eſtimable. He anſwered, he had a

" place;

" place; and was Chamberlain to the King. I re-
" peated his own retort on Congreve, and told
" him, that, if he had only been Chamberlain,
" I ſhould not have troubled myſelf to come and
" ſee him.

" This reply ſeemed to ſoften. He aſſured me,
" he had no objections to the paſſage in queſtion;
" but that it would not be ſo eaſy to make my
" peace with the Marquis d'Argens, who was nei-
" ther a buffoon nor a dwarf; or with the Baron
" Polnitz, who, perhaps ****, but who was real-
" ly a perſon of rank; or with Count Algarotti,
" who deſerved much more reſpect; or with M.
" de Maupertuis, who was preſident of an acade-
" my, which he would never ſuffer to be entered
" by any one who had affirmed, that thoſe perſons,
" who were rather the King's friends than his jeſ-
" ters, were only buffoons and dwarfs.

" I went to M. de Maupertuis, not with a view
" of entering into an explanation, but to aſſure
" him, I had not intentionally given umbrage. He
" told me, it was true, that, at ſupper, with the
" King, M. de Voltaire had given a malicious inter-
" pretation to a paſſage in my book, as if I had
" meant to ſay, the learned men of the court were
" all buffoons and dwarfs, and the King himſelf a
" petty German Prince; but that Count Algarotti,
" having gone to M. de Voltaire's, and tranſcribed

" the

" the paſſage, had brought it to him at midnight;
" that they were both of opinion, Voltaire had pur-
" poſely wreſted the ſenſe; for that it contained no-
" thing offenſive, it being evident, I meant to ſay,
" the King of Pruſſia was as much ſuperior to other
" Princes, who take delight in dwarfs and buffoons,
" as the learned of his court were ſuperior to ſuch
" dwarfs and buffoons; that, probably, what had
" offended Voltaire, was theſe words, which he had
" not cited before the King, *There have been greater*
" *poets than Voltaire, but never any ſo well rewarded.*

" When I aſked M. de Maupertuis, whether the
" King was prejudiced againſt me, he replied, he
" believed not, but that he thought thoſe at table
" were not very well pleaſed to ſee ſo much heat
" manifeſted by Voltaire, who dwelt much on their
" being compared to buffoons and dwarfs: a com-
" pariſon which the King might ſecretly think very
" applicable.

" M. de Maupertuis added, if I thought the King
" prejudiced againſt me, he would adviſe me to ſend
" him my book, as the beſt method to undeceive
" him; which I did, not by Darget,* whom I diſ-
" truſted, but by M. de Frederesdorff, Valet de
" Chambre, and Grand Treaſurer to the King; and
" to this I was adviſed by M. de Maupertuis.

" Unfortunately, I told Madame de ***, that I

* Then Secretary to the King of Pruſſia, and a friend of M. de Voltaire.

" had

" had written to the King, and ſent him my book.
" This lady, being the intimate friend of Voltaire,
" told it him again, and Voltaire, no doubt, took
" meaſures with Darget that the King ſhould nei-
" ther ſee the book nor the letter. After having
" been referred ſeveral times for an anſwer from
" Frederesdorff to Darget, and from Darget to Fre-
" dereſdorff, always in a myſterious manner, I re-
" ceived a letter from Darget, in the King's name,
" containing ſeveral things which were impoſſible
" to come from the King.

" However irritated I might be at ſuch a pro-
" cedure, which I, with ſufficient reaſon, attribu-
" ted to M. de Voltaire and his party, I did not
" think proper to break entirely with him. A ty-
" ger may be won by careſſes. I went to ſee him
" on the 3d of January, 1752, in company with M. de
" la Lande, the ſame, who, at twenty years of age,
" without cabal, or the intrigues of women, was
" admitted into a ſociety,* of which it is a glory to
" become a member at forty. He was witneſs to
" my reception from M. de Voltaire. He ſaw the
" command I poſſeſſed of myſelf, my mildneſs,
" compaſſion, and the reſpect I thought due to
" great abilities, real or ſuppoſed. I muſt have
" been deeply impreſſed with a deſire not to be on

* *L'Académie des Sciences.*

" ill

" ill terms with ſo great a man, ſince my moderation
" was ſo remarkable, that M. de la Lande, who is
" himſelf ſo temperate, expreſſes his aſtoniſhment
" at it to this day.

" The ſixth of the ſame month, appeared my
" Ode on the Queen of Denmark. It was thought
" very poetical, and ſo it was for Copenhagen, whi-
" ther I ſent it; and for Berlin alſo, where there are
" perhaps fewer perſons of taſte than at Coper-
" hagen. Though the Counteſs of * * had re-
" queſted M. de Voltaire not to give it a bad cha-
" racter, he decried it to the King. I was not hurt,
" but I cauſed him to be informed, that my verſes
" were, at leaſt, better than his conduct, or his
" Epiſtle againſt God.

" The King, dining in public, after ſpeaking of
" this ode, ſaid, I had a collection of the letters of
" Madame de Maintenon, but that, probably, the
" manner in which I had acquired them, would not
" ſuffer me to prove their authenticity. M. de Vol-
" taire was the only perſon to whom I had ſpoken
" concerning theſe letters; I had aſſured him, I
" came properly by them, and had no doubt but
" they were genuine, though I was not acquainted
" with any of the relations or friends of Madame
" de Maintenon. He then believed, or pretended
" to believe, they were pirated. I forgave him
" this ſhameful conjecture, and forgave his having

" made

" made it public; it was perfectly conſiſtent with
" the logic of his heart.

" Madame de * * bore my complaints to M. de
" Voltaire, who acknowledged he was miſtaken,
" but afterwards ſpread a report, that this collec-
" tion, which I ſaid was ſo valuable, might be
" had at St. Cyr for four louis. This was taking
" a ſtrange advantage of the little knowledge the
" Germans have of the ladies of St. Cyr.

" This falſhood came to the ears of the Queens.
" I had the ſatisfaction to undeceive them, by let-
" ters, which perhaps afford few proofs of my diſ-
" cretion, but which detected the deceit of my, I
" would ſay, enemies, if I knew of more than one.
" Madame de * *, who had flattered herſelf ſhe
" ſhould be able to reconcile us, reproached M. de
" Voltaire with this new act of hoſtility. He denied
" it, and ſaid the report firſt originated at Lord
" Tyrconnel's. This was true, but he it was who
" firſt raiſed it there. M. de Voltaire had excited a
" coldneſs towards me in Lord Tyrconnel, to whom
" I had been ſtrongly recommended, by perſuad-
" ing this nobleman I had deceived him, in pre-
" tending to intruſt him with the true reaſon of
" my journey to Berlin.

" On the 27th of January I had an adventure of
" gallantry, which was attended with ſome diſagree-
" able conſequences. I was robbed, in the houſe of

" a Captain

" a Captain of cavalry, by that very Captain him-
" ſelf, whoſe name was Cochius, and whoſe wife
" had coquetted with me at the opera, where ſhe
" was in company with the maids of honor of the
" Queen. Count Hake, governor of Berlin, a man
" educated in the hatred of the French name, took
" as active a part, in this affair, as if it had happened
" with his own wife, and related the matter, to the
" King, with as much falſe paſſion as if he had
" not ſpoken to a Prince who was the ſincereſt of
" the lovers of truth.

" I was condemned without either being exa-
" mined or confronted with Captain Cochius,
" who, after having been my aſſaſſin, had the ef-
" frontery to become my accuſer.

" I was conducted to Spandaw, but not con-
" fined in the citadel. I wrote from thence to
" the King, Count Podewils, the Prince of Pruſ-
" ſia, and the Grand Chancellor. I claimed the
" protection of thoſe laws which had all been ſo
" groſsly violated.

" My friends were few, and they without in-
" tereſt. Every one abandoned my cauſe, though
" every one knew me to be innocent. M. de
" Maupertuis alone had the honeſty not to laugh
" at the recital which the King, unacquainted
" with the truth, made of my adventure; and
" the fortitude to ſtate the tranſaction in ſuch a

" light

light as to diſarm his Majeſty of ridicule, to whom he ſaid, that though what Captain Cochius had alledged were true, the Captain was not the leſs culpable for having exceeded his authority, and plundered me of my property.

" M. de Maupertuis having prepared the King to liſten to the truth, Count Podewils acquainted him with the real facts in a letter. M. Hake received orders to make me reparation. The King, in his letter to M. Hake, of which I have a collated copy, expreſsly ſays, he greatly laments my misfortune. Commiſſioners were named who did me immediate juſtice. Captain Cochius and his wife were, within three days, ſeized, examined, confronted, judged, condemned and puniſhed. A *letre de cachet* confirmed their ſentence.

" The eighth of February, on my return from Berlin, the Counteſs of ** told me, M. de Voltaire had openly declared his deteſtation of the villainy of Count Hake, and that, if his advice had been followed, all the French in Berlin would have thrown themſelves at the feet of the Queens, to implore the protection of the laws, which had, in the perſon of a Frenchman, been ſo violently infringed.

" I now yielded to my ſenſations of gratitude, and a deſire of reconciliation, and went to re-

" turn

" turn him thanks. He received my acknow-
" ledgements as if they were his due, and we
" promiſed totally to forget the paſt.

" That very day I learned, from M. de la
" Lande, the ſervice rendered me by M. de Mau-
" pertuis, and heard, from the Baron de Tau-
" benheim, that M. de Voltaire had ſaid at my
" Lord Tyrconnel's, my affair was nothing to the
" French, becauſe I was no Frenchman; or, if I
" were, I had been baniſhed from France; or, if not
" from France, at leaſt from Denmark; or, if I had
" not been baniſhed from Denmark, I was cer-
" tainly a bad chriſtian, and on that account un-
" worthy the protection of the Miniſter of the
" moſt Chriſtian King. He had ſaid a hundred
" things of this kind in a bantering way; and,
" among others, that the French Miniſter had
" ſeverely puniſhed the perſon who had intro-
" duced my book, entitled, *Mes Penſées*, (My
" Thoughts) into Paris: and, in ſhort, that I was
" deeply involved in debt; though, when I was
" arreſted, I only owed forty livres to the inn-
" keeper, for which ſum though it was utterly
" impoſſible I ſhould pay it, at that moment, my
" goods were ſeized, plundered, and loſt. All
" this was not news from the King's ſupper;
" learned it from common report.

" I re

" I requeſted Madame de ** to inform M. de
" Voltaire what I had heard, and to let him
" know how happy I ſhould be, would he con-
" tradict the aſſertions of which he was ſaid to be
" the author.

" On the fourteenth, he ſent to me twice, de-
" ſiring I would come to him. I ſuppoſed Ma-
" dame de ** had interfered, and that he wiſhed
" to juſtify himſelf. Scarcely was I ſeated before
" he ſaid, I am very ſorry to underſtand, there
" are ſeveral copies of that book, in which the
" King's Chamberlain is treated as a buffoon and
" a dwarf, in circulation. I replied, that before
" our treaty of peace, I had given a dozen to a
" bookſeller; that the preceding day I had bought
" half of them, which had coſt me 250 livres, and
" that, therefore, there were but ſix copies
" abroad. Six copies! anſwered he: they are ſo
" many daggers! I did not promiſe you, return-
" ed I, to buy up all the copies, I have done
" what I have done out of regard to myſelf. I
" expected thanks, and you load me with re-
" proaches. I thought this diſpute had been at an
" end, but you reſume it again with more aſpe-
" rity than ever. What ſtrange conduct! After
" having taken a turn or two in his chamber, he
" told me he had diſcovered a way to remedy the
" wrong. You may cancel the ſheet, and inſert a

" new one, in which you may disavow the sup-
" posed sense, by giving a new turn to the pas-
" sage. I replied, I did not admire such an ex-
" pedient, that the book was already made public
" in Paris, that therefore a cancel would answer
" no purpose, and that I knew not what to sub-
" stitute. How easily could he have relieved me
" from this latter embarrassment!

" Are you not preparing, said he, a second
" edition at Hamburgh? Yes, answered I, but
" your name cannot be inserted; nothing will
" remain in it but what has some relation to laws
" and government. It will contain the names of
" none but great men. But M. de Montesquieu's
" will remain? Most certainly; without him nei-
" ther I nor my book can live: but M. de Mon-
" tesquieu is a great man in a science which it-
" self is truly great: whereas poets are great only
" in trifles. Besides, I am much surprised you
" should wish your name to have a place in a
" work so reprehensible, and which you have
" spoken so ill of to Lord Tyrconnel.

" Since you do not understand me, said he, I
" have done with you. Most willingly, replied
" I, and give me leave to observe, I have been
" thus desirous of keeping terms with you, only
" out of respect to the public. At these words
" his visage grew inflamed, his features lengthen-

" ed,

ed, his eyes flaſhed fire, he foamed at the mouth, and placed his arms on his ſides with a kind of majeſtic frenzy. You would have thought him acting one of his own tragedies. Is it thus, ſaid he, you treat an officer to two Monarchs? Is this your treatment of the Chamberlain of the King! If you are diſſatisfied, retorted I, I will treat you differently. I leave you to your choice.

" The Counteſs of * * endeavored to reconcile us once more. She undertook to anſwer for M. de Voltaire, who never could anſwer for himſelf. This was a bold undertaking. Her advice was, that we ſhould write to each other, ſince it was not poſſible for us to meet without quarrelling, and that I ſhould write firſt. A ſevere ſtipulation this; but when we are conſcious of being in the right, trifles are diſregarded. I followed her advice, and ſhe approved my letter, although it was tinctured with an air of ſuperiority, which we often aſſume without perceiving it, when we are writing to a perſon who has acted unworthy of his character.

" The next day ſhe brought me the anſwer of M. de Voltaire, which I would not receive, becauſe it was not ſigned, and becauſe, inſtead of acceding to the terms of amity, he had only

" anſwered the direction of my letter. He com-
" plained I had refuſed him the title and honor of
" Gentleman in Ordinary to his Majeſty, which is
" ſtill preſerved to me, ſaid he, by the King.

" About this time appeared his Age of Louis
" XIV. I affirmed, as did all perſons of taſte, that
" it was full of defects, of trifles, and of witticiſms.
" Some Germans ſeemed enchanted with it, and
" I drew up a critique, purpoſely to undeceive
" them. M. de Voltaire was informed of this by
" the Counteſs of * *, to whom I told all theſe
" kind of ſecrets, becauſe I knew ſhe would tell
" them him again. To conceive his anxiety, it
" is neceſſary to have a thorough knowledge of
" his vanity.

" Madame de * * gave me to underſtand, M. de
" Voltaire would take an exemplary vengeance,
" and that ſeveral Sovereigns would grant him
" their ſupport. I anſwered, had ſhe commanded
" me to ſacrifice my works to my reſpect for
" her, I ſhould not have heſitated, but that,
" by repeating to me the menaces of M. de Vol-
" taire, both ſhe and he had put it out of my
" power to retract."

In fact, M. de la Beaumelle publiſhed the Age of Louis XIV, with notes ſeverely critical.

M. de Voltaire replied by a Supplement ſtill more ſevere than the notes, and at laſt procured the

the author to be impriſoned in the Baſtile. M. de la Beaumelle, on his enlargement, publiſhed, in anſwer to the Supplement to the Age of Louis XIV, ſome very ſatirical letters, which were reprinted in 1761, and the two authors, from that time, never ceaſed to load each other with abuſe.

Among the ſcandalous reports, which M. de la Beaumelle had propagated in Pruſſia, there were ſeveral which deſerved refutation, and this principally engaged M. de Voltaire to write the following letter, which is not to be found in his works.

A LETTER from M. DE VOLTAIRE to KOEING, after his leaving Pruſſia, and his arrival at Francfort on the Maine.

YOUR martyr is arrived at Francfort, and ſo weak as to have a very near proſpect of that unknown country where we ſhall learn the principles of things, and diſcover what is that motive force, concerning which we reaſon ſo profoundly in theſe nether regions, but of which I am at preſent nearly deſtitute. I have, as I told you, been unperceived with reſpect to the falſe ideas given me by your enemies, about *relative* and *abſolute velocity*; but it is more difficult to ſhake off the illuſions

ſions of this world, and thoſe ſenſations which attach us to it, even to the laſt moment of life. The ſenſations I have felt, for having taken your part, have been ſufficiently ſevere; yet I do not repent, and I ſhall die in this faith. It always appeared to me abſurd to make the exiſtence of God depend on A plus B, divided by Z.

What would become of the human race, if it were neceſſary to ſtudy mechanics and aſtronomy to be convinced of the exiſtence of the Supreme Being? He who has created us all, ought to be manifeſt to all, and the commoneſt proofs are the beſt, becauſe they are common. We only ſtand in need of the aſſiſtance of our eyes, and not of algebra, to perceive the ſun. God has provided every thing neceſſary for our ſmalleſt wants, and to be certain of his exiſtence is our greateſt. He has granted us ſufficient aſſiſtance to obtain this certainty. But as it is by no means neceſſary we ſhould know what motive force is, and whether it is or is not a property eſſential to matter we are ignorant of its nature, but we talk about it. There are a thouſand principles which eſcape our utmoſt reſearches, becauſe the Creator did not intend we ſhould underſtand all his ſecrets. It has long been imagined Nature does every thing the ſhorteſt way, employs the ſmalleſt force, and is the greateſt œconomiſt poſſible. But what will

the maintainers of this opinion reply to those who demonstrate, that our arms employ a power of near fifty pounds to raise a weight of one pound; that the heart exerts an immense force to express a single drop of blood; that a carp lays ten thousand eggs to produce one or two other carps; and that an oak yields an innumerable quantity of acorns, of which, very frequently, not one becomes a tree. I shall always think, as I wrote to you long ago, that profusion, rather than œconomy, is the characteristic of Nature.

As to your particular dispute with your adversary, the opinion that justice and reason are on your side, gains, with me, continual strength. You know I did not declare for you till you had sent me your Appeal to the Public. I then openly proclaimed what has been since repeated by all the academies, and I besides took the liberty to burlesque a very ridiculous book which your persecutor wrote about the same time.

All this has plunged me in a multitude of misfortunes, which ought not to have arisen from so slight a cause. This also is one of the profusions of Nature. She generates innumerable evils, which spring up in swarms from the smallest seed.

I can assure you, our common persecutor has paid no attention to his favorite law of parsimony. He took out the spicket from the tun of evil,

when

when he was in the preſence of Jupiter. What a ſtrange falling off, to paſs from Jupiter to La Beaumelle! How can he excuſe his want of ſenſibility in raiſing up againſt me ſo mean an enemy? Can he prevent its being known that be publiſhed, not long ſince, a Memoir by La Beaumelle, reviſed and corrected by himſelf? Is it not well known where he reſided from the firſt to the fourth of laſt May, under the name of Morel, to have this libel printed? Is not the bookſeller known, and that Francfort is printed in the title page? What an employment for the Preſident of an Academy! On the twelfth of May he ſent a copy to his Serene Highneſs the Duke of Saxe Gotha, hoping by that to deprive me of the protection and kindneſs with which I was honored during my illneſs at Gotha. This was bad calculation for a mathematician. La Beaumelle was confined in the Baſtile from the 22d of April, for having inſulted citizens and ſovereigns in two wretched publications; he could not therefore ſend to Gotha and other courts of Germany this ridiculous Memoir, printed in his name; this is an argument not to be refuted. It is in the ſpecies of probabilities what yours are in that of demonſtrations. What I wrote to you, about a year ago, is certainly true. Artifices are the worſt weapons for men of letters. They imagine themſelves politicians, and they

are

are only knaves. There is no policy in literature. We ought to ſtate facts, ſpeak truth, and die martyrs. But to cauſe one's friend to be condemned for forgery, to vaunt of moderation for being abſent when ſentence was pronounced againſt him, not to reply to the cleareſt proofs, to pay the pen of a hireling with the academy's money, to aſſociate with the meaneſt of ſcribblers, be engaged in nothing but cabals, and perſonally to accuſe whom we have perſonally oppreſſed, theſe acts are to the everlaſting diſgrace of the human underſtanding.

The Belles Lettres are commonly a field for diſputes, they are on this occaſion a field of battle. We are no longer amuſed with laughable and innocent jeſts on the diſſection of giants, or on the method of heating the imagination to look into futurity.

Ludus enim trepidum genuit certamen et iram,
Ira truces inimicitias et funebre bellum.

I do not diſpute, when the queſtion turns on poetry or eloquence; it is then an affair of taſte, and every one has his own. I cannot, by making a man yawn, prove him in the wrong.

I reply to the critics in any queſtion of philoſophy or hiſtory, becauſe on theſe ſubjects we may ſometimes make ſeven or eight readers, who will give us a quarter of an hour's attention, underſtand

ſtand reaſon, and I ſometimes reply to calumnies, becauſe there are more readers of ſlanderous libels than of uſeful books.

For example, Sir, when my enemies proclaim, in print, I informed an illuſtrious author you intended to write againſt his works; I reply, you know by inconteſtible proofs, not only that this is falſe, but that I have always done the preciſe contrary.

When they dare aſſert, in periodical publications, that I have ſold my works to three or four bookſellers in Germany and Holland, I am obliged to anſwer, they are liars, ſince there is no bookſeller in either of thoſe countries can ſay I have ever ſold him the ſmalleſt manuſcript.

When they affirm, I falſely aſſume the title of Gentleman in Ordinary to the King of France, am I not forced to ſay, that, without ever adding titles to my name, I have nevertheleſs the honor to poſſeſs that place, which is ſtill continued to me by the King, my maſter?

When I am attacked concerning my birth, ought I not, out of reſpect to my family, to anſwer, I am born the equal of thoſe who hold the ſame place with myſelf; and that if I have ſpoken with modeſty on this ſubject, it is becauſe that very place was formerly occupied by the Montmorencies and Chatillons?

When

When they declare in print a certain Sovereign ſaid to me, 'I continue your penſion, but forbid you to appear in my preſence.' I reply, whoever advanced this abſurdity has lied, impudently.

When it is ſaid, in Journals and Gazettes, that I publiſhed the variations of the Henriade under the name of M. Marmontel, is it not likewiſe my duty to declare, this is falſe; that M. Marmontel has written a preface to one of the editions of the Henriade, and that the Abbé Lenglet Dufrenoy, had before publiſhed the variations at Paris? When they aſſert, I am the author of I know not what book, entitled, The Beauties of the French Language; I anſwer, I have never read it; and I ſay the ſame concerning all the impertinent pieces which anonymous writers circulate in my name, a name indeed, but too well known.

When my enemies publiſh a pretended letter from Lord Tyrconnel, I am obliged to give the lie publicly to the calumniator: and, ſince he fabricates theſe wretched libels to gain a little money, I declare myſelf ready to maintain him as long as he lives, if he can prove a ſingle fact he has advanced.

When they affirm, I ſhall ſoon write againſt the works of a dignified author, whom I muſt eſteem

eſteem to the laſt moment of my life, I reply, that, till now, ſlander was confined to the paſt, and never extended itſelf to the future; that this is *heating the imagination* too much, and that I will make the firſt who has the audacity to write againſt the Auguſt Perſonage, alluded to, repent his temerity.

When they aſſert, I have falſely boaſted there is an edition of the Henriade honored with the preface of a Sovereign; I anſwer, it is not true I made any ſuch boaſt, it is not true that this edition exiſts, and it is not true that this preface, which really does exiſt, has ever been improperly cited; it has always been cited in the editions of the Henriade, ſince that of M. Marmontel, and was written to be placed at the head of this poem, which the illuſtrious Sovereign, of whom I here ſpeak, intended to have had engraved, a double honor done to this work.

When it is aſſerted, I have ſtolen a Madrigal from the late M. de la Motte; I reply, I never ſteal verſes, I have written but too many, and have given both verſes and money to ſeveral young writers, without theſe facts ever having been mentioned, by me or by them.

In this manner, Sir, am I obliged to refute the ſlanders with which I am every day loaded by various authors; ſome of whom are entirely unknown to me, and others indebted to my generoſity.

neroſity. I might aſk them, why they take part, with ſuch vehemence, in a quarrel in which they are not concerned; and why they ſtill continue to perſecute me on the very brink of the grave? But I aſk them nothing; continue to defend your cauſe as I defend mine. There are occaſions in which we ought to ſay with Cicero,

Seipſum deſerere turpiſſimum eſt.

When we die we ſhould leave proofs of our friendſhip to our friends, repentance to our enemies, and our reputation in the hands of the public. I am, Sir, &c.

We come now to the different places in which M. DE VOLTAIRE reſided, after the adventure at Francfort: we ſhall ſpeak of his retreat from Geneva, and in the Pays de Gex, and of the troubles he there encountered.

M. DE VOLTAIRE having left Francfort, where he had experienced ſo many difficulties, continued his journey to Mayence. Here he ſtopped, 'to dry his clothes after his ſhipwreck.' He went from thence to Manheim, and the Elector Palatine received him with all the reſpect due to ſuperior abilities. He left the court of this amiable and beneficent Prince, and paſſed ſome time at Straſbourg, in a houſe without the city, where he ſaw no company, except a few intimate friends.

He

He was then employed on his Annals of the Empire, which was publiſhed by Schopflin at Colmar. The deſire of ſuperintending the impreſſion of his book induced him to go to that city, the ſituation of which pleaſed him extremely.

He requeſted the Duke of Wirtemberg to grant him, on an improving leaſe, an old chateau at Horbourg, near Colmar. This propoſition had been agreed to, but for Father Crouſt, Superior of the Jeſuits at Colmar, and brother to the Confeſſor of the Dauphineſs, who beheld with regret an infidel in that city, intent on propagating the principles of free-thinking, and obliged M. de Voltaire to ſeek another aſylum.

Marechal Richelieu, who was deſirous to ſee him, had appointed to meet him at Lyons. Voltaire went thither, and there continued near three months. He would have ſtayed longer, but Cardinal de Tencin, Archbiſhop of that city, looked on him with an evil eye; Voltaire paid him a viſit, but met with a very cold reception. The Cardinal even wrote againſt him to court, and ſaid to thoſe who ſpoke in favor of his continuance at Lyons, *You know not how much miſchief he has done here.*

The health of the French poet began to decline, through labor, the fatigues of travelling, and pining, at not being permitted to return to Paris,

Paris. It is true, he was not formally baniſhed, but ſeveral works, attributed to him, and manuſcript copies of the *Pucelle*, which began to be circulated, had incenſed againſt him the chiefs of the law, the goſpel, and the government. He foreſaw difficulties which threatened to embitter the remainder of his life, and therefore determined to retire to a free country.

His health was at firſt the pretext for this reſolution. He was troubled with an obſtinate ſciatica, for which the remedies of the phyſicians of Lyons had been inſufficient; and reſolved to conſult the celebrated Tronchin, who was riſing into great reputation. To take the benefit of his advice more eaſily, he purchaſed a houſe near Geneva, called *Les Delices*. The Geneveſe phyſician removed his diſorder, not ſo much by the uſe of medicine, as by ſubjecting him to a regimen, and preſcribing patience, the firſt of all remedies.

The ſituation of this houſe was, during the ſummer, extremely agreeable. M. de Voltaire wiſhed for a winter reſidence, and bought another near Lauſanne. This new retreat was a delightful ſpot. "There is not (ſays he, in a letter to M. Darget) a finer proſpect in the world than that from my houſe. Figure to yourſelf fifteen windows in front; a lake twelve leagues

"long,

" long, preſenting itſelf to the eye, and ano-
" ther four or five in length; a terrace which
" commands the proſpect of a hundred gardens,
" while, at the bottom of mine, the ſame lake
" appears like a vaſt mirror, beyond which we
" ſee the fruitful fields of Savoy, overtopped by
" the Alps, that lift their heads to the ſkies and
" form a prodigious amphitheatre. In one word,
" imagine a houſe in which I feel no inconvenience,
" except from flies, during the moſt rigorous
" winter; and which has been ornamented by
" Madame Denis, with all the taſte of a Pariſian."

There was at that time a ſelect ſociety of ami-
able ladies and reſpectable gentlemen at Lau-
ſanne, who amuſed themſelves by performing
plays. M. de Voltaire and Madame Denis, his
niece, wiſhed to partake of this entertainment.
They were not ſatisfied with merely inſtructing
the actors and actreſſes, but played themſelves in
ſeveral pieces, eſpecially in Zaïre, in which they
gained univerſal applauſe. The Baron de Core-
von, Lord of the Pays de Vaud, wrote to M. de
Voltaire, after the performance, and paid him a
very flattering compliment. The poet replied
on a card, " Zaïre and good old Luſignan are
" much obliged to the Baron de Corevon. Such
" are the perſons they are ambitious to pleaſe."

Vol

Voltaire was not only ambitious to pleaſe, but ſucceeded. He flattered both in verſe and proſe, and rendered himſelf agreeable by ſprightly ſallies and ingenious compliments. Yet he preferred *Les Delices* to his houſe at Monrion, near Lauſanne; but did not long enjoy happineſs there, for he could only perform plays by ſtealth, and could not reconcile himſelf to *the perriwig-pated fellows of Geneva*, for ſo he ſtiled the magiſtrates, who interrupted his amuſements. He treated the miniſters with as little reſpect, calling them, in his ſatirical verſes, buffoons in ſhort cloaks; church ſycophants, and preachers of ſtolen ſermons. This, in a great meaſure, occaſioned the troubles he met with there; but he concealed the true reaſon, and rather choſe to attribute his not being able to enjoy his ſeat at *Les Delices* to Jean Jaques Rouſſeau.

" He (ſays Voltaire, in a letter to the Che-
" valier de Pezai) incenſed againſt me ſeveral
" citizens of Geneva, enemies to the magiſtracy.
" He excited them to render the council of Ge-
" neva odious, and to reproach it for ſuffering,
" contrary to law, a catholic to acquire poſſeſ-
" ſions in their territories, though any citizen
" of Geneva may purchaſe eſtates in France, and
" enjoy places in the finances. Thus this man,
" who preached up liberty of conſcience at Paris,

" and who had ſo much need of toleration him-
" ſelf, endeavored to eſtabliſh in Geneva the moſt
" oppreſſive and ridiculous bigotry.

" M. Tronchin, himſelf, heard one of the in-
" habitants, who has long been the principal fire-
" brand of the republic, aſſert, that it was ab-
" ſolutely neceſſary to take M. Rouſſeau's advice,
" and remove me from Les Delices, which is
" ſituated in the neighbourhood of Geneva. M.
" Tronchin, who is as reſpectable a man as he is
" an excellent phyſician, warded off this blow
" aimed at me, though he did not inform me of
" it till long after. I then foreſaw the troubles
" which would ſoon ariſe in the little Republic
" of Geneva, and refuſed ſigning a life-leaſe, &c."

This paſſage clearly proves, that M. de Voltaire had a party formed againſt him at Geneva, but it is far from proving Rouſſeau was the head of that party.

Whatever may be the truth, M. de Voltaire, who foreſaw the ſtorm which threatened him, endeavored to procure an eſtate in France. He purchaſed Tournai and Fernei, and fixed his reſidence in the latter, the caſtle of which he rebuilt. Here he received, ſometimes as Lord of the Manor and ſometimes as philoſopher, the homage of Princes, Literati, and all thoſe whoſe curioſity induced them to become his viſitors. Fernei had

been

been a lordſhip, abſolutely free from all impoſts or dues to the King, from the time of Henry IV. There were not two eſtates in the kingdom which poſſeſſed the like privileges. The King confirmed them to him by brevet, and granted him a penſion of two thouſand livres, in 1761, independent of that he already poſſeſſed, and the other favors of the court. What was there wanting to compleat his happineſs? Nothing. But his fondneſs for writing on ſubjects which he ought to have treated with more reſpect: the frenzy of obtaining, not only admirers of his talents, but partiſans to his opinions,* once more diſturbed his repoſe.

In 1766, after the melancholy affair which brought the Chevalier de la Barré to the ſcaffold, he feared being arreſted, becauſe the Philoſophical Dictionary was often quoted during the trial of that raſh headlong youth. He then reſolved to retire to Weſſel, a city in the juriſdiction of the King of Pruſſia. For that he had thus reſolved ſufficiently appears, from a letter he wrote, on the ſubject of ſuch a report having been ſpread, which was not without foundation. "It "is true (writes he) I felt the greateſt and moſt

* Mr. Sherlock ſays, in his letters, that Voltaire was always ambitious of founding a religion, but he certainly deſtroyed more than he founded.

" durable indignation, but I did not take this
" ſuppoſed reſolution. I might have done it,
" had I been younger and more vigorous: but
" to tranſplant at my age, and in my infirm con-
" dition, is very difficult. I ſhall wait under the
" trees I have reared for that moment when I
" ſhall hear no more of theſe horrors, which make
" us prefer the bears of the mountain to apes
" and tygers in the ſhape of men."

The fears of M. de Voltaire were ſoon after revived, and he had recourſe to a new expedient peaceably to enjoy his retreat at Fernei. He pre tended to be converted.

In 1768 and 1769, all the Gazettes were filled with the recantations, confeſſions, and communi catings of the author of the Philoſophical Diction ary. He ſent them himſelf to the Editors of the Gazettes. This is not a doubtful anecdote. I have had in my poſſeſſion one of his letters, ſe to the editor of a provincial paper, which has a extenſive ſale both in France and foreign countri

M. de Voltaire's taking the ſacrament on Eaſt day, 1768, in the pariſh church of Fernei, a afterwards making a diſcourſe to the people, aſ ſembled at the foot of the altar, againſt theft, account of his having been robbed of a cow, a peared a great impropriety to the Biſhop of A neci. That prelate did not conceal his opini fr

from M. de Voltaire, who defended himſelf as well as he was able. Their letters are to be found at the end of Voltaire's *Tableau de l'Eſprit*, and in other books; we ſhall not, therefore, make extracts.

We ſhall only add, that M. de Voltaire, at Eaſter, 1769, fearing to be refuſed the ſacrament, took advantage of a fever with which he was then attacked, to ſend for the Hoſt as a viaticum. He had ſent for the curate of Fernei, offering to make all requiſite declarations and proteſtations, whether public or private, and to ſubmit himſelf to whatever was cuſtomary. At the ſame time, a Capuchin, of Gex, was procured, who performed what his duty required, while Voltaire appeared to be dying. The declarations made on this occaſion, by the pretended convert, have been ſo often printed, that repetitions are uſeleſs.

The curate of Fernei, knowing that on the very day when Voltaire ſaid he was dying, he had walked in his garden, and had ſpoken in terms of the higheſt ridicule of the ſacred ceremony which had juſt been performed, perceived he had been again made a dupe. He ſhewed an extreme coolneſs to M. de Voltaire, and the Capuchins of Gex refuſed to be ſeen any more at the caſtle, though the latter called himſelf their ſpiritual father. He had indeed

indeed letters of affiliation to their order, which he had elegantly framed and placed in the moſt conſpicuous part of his houſe. As theſe letters are ſometimes given without being filled up, a lawyer at Grenoble had obtained ſome and ſent them to Voltaire; but it is falſe, that they had been immediately addreſſed to him by the General of the Order, as he ſaid and wrote.

Voltaire, however, received the Capuchins when they came to viſit him very politely; but, notwithſtanding his profeſſions of friendſhip, he could not refrain from a few witticiſms. He at firſt beſtowed alms on them, but latterly refuſed, on account of their denying him ſome little ſervices.

M. Gros, his curate, obtained likewiſe from him aſſiſtance for the poor and the ſick, but had not the ſame ſucceſs in ſuch applications to him as M. Hugonet, the preſent curate of Fernei, a wiſe and moderate man, who ſeeing to how little purpoſe it was to endeavor the converſion of Voltaire contented himſelf to live politely and on good terms with him, without any great familiarity, and to ſolicit charity for the poor of the pariſh. The Lord of Fernei ſeldom refuſed, becauſe he really eſteemed him, and was not inſenſible to the ſufferings of others.

We forgot to relate, that when M. de Voltaire made his pretended preparation for the ſacrament, he cauſed Bourdaloue's ſermons to be read to him while he was at table, eſpecially if any perſon preſent had any direct or indirect connexion with the Biſhop of Anneci. He paraphraſed the moſt ſtriking paſſages, and added remarks which muſt have made great impreſſion on thoſe who were not aware of his ſecret deſigns.

By theſe exterior appearances of religion, he hoped to ſilence the Biſhop of Anneci, who had written to court to procure the removal of this leader of modern free-thinkers from his dioceſe. But this prelate was not to be ſo deceived, he being well informed how much the behavior of Voltaire was inconſiſtent with his pretended converſion. He gave the falſe penitent to underſtand, he ſhould not change his opinion till he changed his conduct, and Voltaire, having inſured his ſafety by the power of his patrons, and the reſpect inſpired by his age and abilities, endeavored no longer to deceive his Biſhop, but openly attacked him with ridicule and ſatire.

This was indeed the general ſtyle of his converſation, as well as his writings, towards all thoſe who had diſpleaſed him, or who, in a moment of vacancy, might afford him a ſubject for laughter. How often was Father Adam, the companion of his

his retreat, preſented to ſtrangers as *not the firſt man of the world?* How many times, when diſcourſing with the Capuchins, has he talked of *our Seraphic Father St. Francis?* This repetition of the ſame jeſts was not perceived by ſtrangers, who only called at Fernei to pay him their paſſing reſpects; but appeared ſomewhat inſipid to thoſe who heard them daily.

The converſation and behavior of Madame Denis was, in general, much more pleaſing, though leſs replete with wit. Almoſt all travellers have praiſed her affability and polite attention. " This Lady " (ſays one of them, who wrote in 1774) has long " been the companion of her uncle, and is de- " ſerving that honor for her underſtanding, her " acquaintance with ſeveral ſciences, her taſte in " various arts, and her talents for muſic. She " plays both comedy and tragedy equal to the " beſt actreſs in Paris; it is even ſaid, ſhe has " written ſeveral dramatic works, which do her " much honor, though her modeſty conceals " them with as much care as any other woman " would take to make them known. She is ſaid " to have written a part of the charming comedy " of Nanine.

" Her tender attachment to her uncle has " been always the ſame; though about the year " 1767, it was pretended they had quarreled; " but

" but this was only a pretext for her journey, as " it is now well known ſhe went to Paris to ſolicit " permiſſion for her uncle to return to that capital, " and to remove the obſtacles thrown in the way " of this project, by the decrees iſſued againſt " certain works attributed to M. de Voltaire. " Though ſhe did not ſucceed, ſhe yet enjoyed " the ſatisfaction of endeavoring to ſerve an un- " cle ſhe tenderly loved, and whom ſhe has fre- " quently reſtored to peace and mild content, in " thoſe moments when the violence of criticiſm, " and apprehenſions, ſometimes not ill founded, " haraſſed and diſturbed the tranquillity of his " life."

After this recital of intermingled Vexations, Diſputes, Diſappointments, and brilliant Succeſſes, we next ſhall recapitulate ſome of the generous Actions which have ſignalized the Life of M. de VOLTAIRE.

IF M. de Voltaire was occaſionally too parſimonious, as has been aſſerted, it cannot be denied but he made an honorable uſe of his fortune in his retreat. He was the firſt who endeavored to vindicate the memory of John Calas, whoſe hiſtory we ſhall here give, for the benefit of thoſe readers who are but imperfectly acquainted with that ſtrange and cruel affair.

This

This unfortunate old man, aged ſixty-eight, had exerciſed the profeſſion of a merchant at Toulouſe more than forty years, and was eſteemed, by all who had lived with him, an indulgent parent. His wife, himſelf, and all his children, were proteſtants, except one, who had abjured thoſe principles, and was allowed a ſmall penſion by his father. He was ſo far from being actuated by that ſpirit of fanaticiſm which looſens all the bands of ſociety, that he approved the converſion of his ſon Louis Calas, and had retained in his houſe, for thirty years, a maid ſervant, who was a zealous catholic, and who had brought up almoſt all his children.

One of the ſons of John Calas was a man of learning. He was conſidered as a perſon of a violent and melancholy temper. This young man being incapable either to enter into trade, for which he was unfit, or procure himſelf to be admitted a lawyer, becauſe he was not able to obtain certificates, that he profeſſed the catholic religion, reſolved to put an end to his life, and even hinted his deſign to one of his friends. He confirmed himſelf in this reſolution, by reading whatever has been written on the ſubject of ſuicide.

At length, having loſt ſome money at play, he choſe that very day for the execution of his deſign.

deſign. A friend of his, and of the family, named Lavaiſſe, a young man, nineteen years of age, and of an amiable diſpoſition, the ſon of a celebrated Advocate at Toulouſe, had arrived in the evening from Bourdeaux, and by accident ſupped at the houſe of Calas. The father, the mother, Mark Anthony, their eldeſt, and Peter, their ſecond ſon, ſat down to table together. After ſupper they retired into a little parlor, and Mark Anthony diſappeared. At length, when young Lavaiſſe was about to depart, Peter Calas and he went down ſtairs, and found Mark Anthony hanging in his ſhirt, at the door of the warehouſe, and his cloaths folded up and lying on a counter. His ſhirt was not even rumpled, his hair was combed ſmooth, and there was no wound nor mark of violence on the body.

Some fanatic, among the populace, cried out, that John Calas had hung his own ſon, Mark Anthony. This, in an inſtant, ran unanimouſly among the multitude, and others preſently added, that the deceaſed intended to have abjured his errors the next day, and that his family, and young Lavaiſſe, had ſtrangled him out of hatred to the catholic religion. A moment paſſed, and this was no longer doubted. The whole city was perſuaded it was an article of religion, among proteſtants,

teſtants, that parents ſhould rather murder their children than ſuffer them to become catholics.

The Sieur David, Capitoul of Thouloufe, excited by theſe rumors, and wiſhing to ſhew his zeal, acted in a manner which neither law, precedent, nor practice could juſtify. The family of Calas, the Catholic ſervant-maid, and Lavaiſſe were ſent to priſon. Thirteen judges aſſembled every day to try the accuſed. There were eight voices againſt five, and the wretched Calas was condemned to be broken on the wheel, though it ſeemed impoſſible to conceive how an old man of ſixty-eight, who had long been extremely infirm, and afflicted with a diſorder in his legs, ſhould have been able, alone, to ſtrangle his ſon aged eighteen, and poſſeſſing more than common bodily ſtrength.

The motive for paſſing this ſentence was as inconceivable as all the reſt of the proceedings. The judges, who had voted for the puniſhment of John Calas, perſuaded the others that this infirm old man would not be able to reſiſt his tortures, but would confeſs, under the hand of the executioner, his own crime, and that of his accomplices. They were confounded, when they found the venerable ſufferer died on the wheel, calling God to witneſs his innocence, and beſeeching him to pardon his judges.

They

They were obliged to iſſue a ſecond arret, contrary to their former judgment, to ſet at liberty the mother, her ſon Peter, young Lavaiſſe, and the ſervant-maid. But one of the counſellors convinced them, that this arret contradicted their former one, and condemned themſelves, ſince the accuſed were altogether at the time of the ſuppoſed parricide, and to ſet at liberty the ſurvivors was demonſtratively to prove the innocence of the father, whom they had executed.

M. de Voltaire was the firſt who aroſe to combat oppreſſion and unravel myſtery. Struck with the impoſſibility of the crime imputed to Calas the father, he encouraged the widow to petition the King for juſtice. His pen, his labors, his fortune, and his credit were all employed in behalf of injured innocence. This ſenſibility did as much honor to his heart as ever did his writings to his underſtanding.

While this affair was in agitation, the Marſhal de R * *, who happened to be at *Les Delices*, requeſted an account of it from M. de Voltaire, in preſence of a numerous company. The author of the Henriade related every particular, with eloquence ſo forcible, and ſo affecting, that he drew tears from the Marſhal and all preſent. M. de Voltaire then introduced one of the Calas', who was in an adjoining room, and the Marſhal de R * *

ſpoke

ſpoke to him as follows: "Sir, I am convinced "your father was innocent, I feel moſt poig- "nantly for your misfortunes; you may rely on "my intereſt and ſupport: ſince you no longer "have a father to ſerve and protect you, it is be- "come my duty." Such actions, which would ennoble an obſcure perſon, cannot but render the man of rank and fortune ſtill more illuſtrious.

But let us return to the endeavors made by M. de Voltaire to repair, as much as in his power, the dreadful diſaſters of the family of Calas. His widow wept, in ſolitude, the loſs of her huſband and her ſon, and was only prevailed on by the ſolicitations of ſome beneficent perſons to throw herſelf at the King's feet and implore his juſtice. She offered to prove that her huſband had been unjuſtly condemned, and intreated the counſel to examine her cauſe with the utmoſt rigor, and inflict on her the moſt ſevere puniſhment if ſhe were guilty. The commiſſioners named by his Majeſty examined the proceedings at Toulouſe, and on Saturday, the ninth of March, 1765, forty-two judges unanimouſly declared the former arret void, and that Madame Calas, her family, and all who had been accuſed, were innocent, and reinſtated in their rights, with coſts, damages, and intereſt. She left the palace amidſt the acclama-

tions

tions of her judges, and the ſurrounding ſpectators.

Louis XV, having been informed that the family of Calas had been declared innocent, did not confine himſelf to an act of fruitleſs and barren juſtice; he heaped his favors on the unfortunate widow and her ſon, and ordered them to be preſented with 36,000 livres, (1500 pounds).

Another affair, of nearly the ſame nature, ſoon after engaged the attention of M. de Voltaire. In 1761, at the very time the proteſtant family of Calas was in priſon, it happened that a daughter of the Sieur Paul Sirven, a Calviniſt, *Commiſſaire Terrier*, in the Pays de Caſtres, was ſhut up in a convent at Caſtres, called *La Maiſon des Regentes.* This young girl was much diſtreſſed at her ſituation; ſhe loſt her ſenſes, and ſome time after threw herſelf into a well in the middle of a field, far from her father's houſe, and near a village named Mazamet.

The judge of that village directly iſſued his warrant againſt the father, the mother, and the ſiſters of the deceaſed. On this news Sirven aſſembled his friends; they all were certain of his innocence, but the fate of the family of Calas had filled the whole province with terror. They adviſed Sirven not to expoſe himſelf to the conſequences of a bigotted proſecution. He fled with his

his wife and daughters in the depth of winter. This unfortunate company were neceſſitated to traverſe, on foot, mountains covered with ſnow. One of Sirven's daughters who had been married but a year, brought forth her child, without aſſiſtance, and in the midſt of froſt and ſnow, and, though half dead herſelf, was forced to carry her dying infant in her arms. At length, having arrived at a place of ſafety, the firſt news they heard was, that the father and mother had been condemned to death, the two ſiſters declared equally guilty, and baniſhed, their goods confiſcated, and that nothing remained for them in this world but diſgrace and miſery.

M. de Voltaire, to whom they applied in this wretched ſituation, aſſiſted them as he had aſſiſted the Calas. He addreſſed himſelf to all the ſovereigns of Europe, who were willing to partake in the glory of protecting the family of Sirven. The King of Denmark, the Landgrave of Heſſe, the Ducheſs of Saxe Gotha, the Princeſs of Naſſau Saarbruck, the Margraveſs of Baden, and the Princeſs of Darmſtadt, equally affected by the innocence and miſeries of the Sirvens, haſtened to beſtow their ſeveral bounties. The King of Pruſſia immediately ſent them a hundred crowns, and offered to receive and protect them in his dominions.

The King of Denmark made them a conſiderable preſent, the Empreſs of Ruſſia did the ſame, and accompanied her gift with theſe words, written with her own hand, WOE TO PERSECUTORS.

The King of Poland, incited by what Madame de Geoffrin ſaid, who was then at Warſaw, tranſmitted them a preſent worthy of himſelf, and Madame de Geoffrin ſet an example to the French, by following that of the King of Poland.

M. de Voltaire, employing to the beſt advantage theſe benefactions, gave the cauſe of Sirven into the hands of the ableſt advocates in Paris, who had the generoſity to refuſe the money conſigned them as their fees.

M. Elie de Beaumont, author of a Memoir, as eloquent as it was convincing, ſignalized himſelf by his diſintereſtedneſs, no leſs than by his oratory.

Sirven, conſcious of the juſtice of his cauſe, addreſſed himſelf to the council, who referred him to the parliament of Toulouſe, by which he was declared innocent. Thus the generoſity of M. de Voltaire was not exerted without effect.

We muſt confeſs, to the praiſe of this poet, that from the time he reſided in the neighbourhood of Geneva, he rarely neglected any opportunity of protecting or aſſiſting the unfortunate; the following are ſome examples which,

though not commonly known, are not therefore the leſs true.

The Jeſuits, in the time of Father La Chaiſe, confeſſor to Louis XIV, had obtained the confiſcation of ſome lands, the annual income of which was a hundred crowns, which lay contiguous to the eſtate of M. de Voltaire, and formerly belonged to a poor gentleman, in a village named Ornex. This donation had been made them for the maintainance of a miſſionary to convert the proteſtants. Theſe lands became, ſoon after, by other acquiſitions, worth four or five thouſand livres *per annum*.

About the year 1754, the Jeſuits of Ornex were deſirous of extending their poſſeſſions by purchaſing the eſtate of ſome minors, which lay very convenient for the reverend fathers. This eſtate belonged to ſeven young gentlemen, officers in the army, who were brothers, and of ſmall fortune. The Jeſuits, at that time, were ſtill in credit, and nobody expected the diſſolution of their order would happen ſo ſuddenly. They obtained letters patent, from the council, to poſſeſs themſelves of the eſtate of theſe minors.

This affair was nearly concluded, when an account of it reached M. de Voltaire. He determined to defend thoſe whom the fathers were about to deprive of the lands of their anceſtors.

He

He depoſited the money in the town-houſe of Gex, and at length, after long litigation, the parliament of Dijon pronounced a decree in favor of the young officers; who, at preſent, are in poſſeſſion of their eſtate, and bleſs the parliament and M. de Voltaire.

He has eminently ſignalized himſelf by his beneficence to his tenants. Having been informed that a worthy man, a tenant on his eſtate at Fernei, was in priſon for 7500 livres, (312 pounds) he gave orders to pay the debt. It was objected that his tenant's whole wealth conſiſted in a numerous family, and that the money muſt be loſt. "So much the better, replied M. de Voltaire, we "never loſe when we give alms, and, by giving, "reſtore a father to his family, and an honeſt man "to his country." If he actually loſt this ſum, it muſt be confeſſed he enjoyed what was far more affecting and delightful than all the ſplendor of the courts in which he had lived. He beheld the tears of tenderneſs and gratitude ſhed by an honeſt family, and received the benedictions of the people of Fernei, who no longer ſtiled him their lord, but their father.

This was alſo the epithet beſtowed on him by Mademoiſelle Corneille, who inherits one of the moſt celebrated names in literature. Jean Francois Corneille, the only male deſcendant, and ſon

of a couſin-german of the famous Peter Corneille, poſſeſſed nothing but his illuſtrious name. He came to Paris hoping to amend his wretched ſituation. The French comedians, on the tenth of March, 1760, acted Rodogune for his benefit, which produced him 5000 livres (208 pounds). Out of this he ſet apart a ſum to give his daughter, then ſeventeen years of age, an education ſuitable to her birth and promiſing genius. M. le Brun, Secretary to the Prince de Conti, wrote to M. de Voltaire in favor of this niece of the great Corneille.

" It is but right (ſaid M. de Voltaire in his anſwer) that an old ſoldier who has fought under " the great Corneille, ſhould endeavor to be " friend the grand-daughter of his general; but " when we are building caſtles and churches, and " have poor relations to provide for, but little " remains to aſſiſt, as we could wiſh, a perſon " who ought only to be aſſiſted by the greatest " characters in the kingdom.

" I am old: I have a niece who is fond of all " the arts, and ſucceeds in ſeveral. If the perſon " you mention, and with whom you are without " doubt acquainted, will accept of a genteel " education under my niece, ſhe will treat her " like her own daughter."

M. d

M. de Voltaire kept his word. He married Mademoiſelle Corneille advantageouſly to M. Dupui, a captain of cavalry, and gave her the profits of a new edition of her uncle's works, which he publiſhed in 1762, in twelve volumes, octavo.

The village of Fernei is much indebted to him for his embelliſhments of the pariſh church, in which, after having repaired it, he placed the inſcription, *Deo erexit Voltaire*, 1762.

Another obligation which the Pays de Gex has to Voltaire, is, the great encouragement he gave to agriculture. "I have purpoſely choſen, ſays he, one of the worſt pieces of ground in France, to build on, and cultivate the ungrateful ſoil, which cannot be ploughed but by the united ſtrength of ſix oxen, and which, producing only three grains of corn for one, had been a conſtant burthen to every poſſeſſor. I determined to try if it were not poſſible, in ſome meaſure, to change Nature by labor and perſeverance, and my attempts on this deſert were not abſolutely unſuccesful. A wretched hamlet, which ſcarcely conſiſted of fifty-five poor creatures, who experienced nothing but diſeaſe and miſery in the extreme, is changed into a neat little village, by conſequence more healthy, and contains already near three hundred inhabitants. A little piece of ground,

" more

" more barren than the worſt part of Cham-
" paigne, which in deriſion is called the *Louſy*,
" has produced harveſts; and I have received
" ten for one, every year, from lands the pro-
" ducts of which never exceeded three, or per-
" haps two for one, in two years."

It cannot be denied but a country is greatly benefited when rendered fertile. This benefit became ſtill more perceptible when M. de Voltaire obtained, under the miniſtry of M. Turgot letters of franchiſement for the Pays de Gex. This little province became free. The extraordinary ſales of ſalt and tobacco were ſuppreſſed, by letters patent, ſtipulating an indemnity to the King for this ſuppreſſion. This indemnity was fixed at 30,000 livres, to be levied from all the lands within this ſlip of earth.

We have related the acts of benevolence and favors M. de Voltaire conferred on others, we now ſhall mention the honors and rewards he obtained for himſelf. M. de Voltaire having been introduced at the age of twelve into the beſt company of Paris, early enjoyed that reſpect and influence which is conſequent on an intimacy with the great. His Oedipus, which piece had amazing ſucceſs, introduced him into the principal families of France. As he was exceedingly thoughtleſs and wild in his youthful ſallies, during

of the repreſentations of this tragedy, he wantonly held up the train of the high prieſt, while the actor who performed the part was in one of the moſt tragic and intereſting ſituations. The Lady of Marſhal Villars, having enquired who it was that appeared ſo jocular, was informed it was the author. She directly ſent for him into her box, and treated him with ſo much diſtinction that ſhe inſpired the young poet with a kind of paſſion.

He wrote many verſes on her; the following, which he preſented to her, with a copy of the Henriade, are ſtill remembered.

Belov'd by you, by you inſpir'd and charm'd!
Your beauties, erſt, I ſang, with grace and ſkill:
Uproſe this work while you my boſom warm'd;
This work were perfect, had you lov'd me ſtill!

Marſhal Villars ſhewed him no leſs kindneſs than his Lady. He firſt introduced him to Marſhal Richelieu, whoſe friendſhip and protection he retained during ſixty years.

The Prince of Conti, father of him who is ſo celebrated for the actions of the Barricade of Demont and Chateau Dauphin, wrote ſome verſes to him after the repreſentation of his Oedipus, and always expreſſed the greateſt friendſhip for him. M. de Voltaire one day ſaid to him, "Monſeigneur,

" ſeigneur, you will become a great poet, and I " muſt procure you a penſion from the King."

But what moſt raiſed Voltaire, in the opinion of the public, was the regular correſpondence which took place, in 1735, between him and the Prince Royal of Pruſſia. That Prince, having mounted the throne, was deſirous of ſeeing the man whoſe works he ſo much admired, and M. de Voltaire went to Berlin in 1740. Frederick loaded him with honors, preſented him to the Queen, his mother, who admitted him to her table, and entertained him with a grand review, which was followed by a magnificent repaſt, conſiſting of more than ſixty covers, at which the French poet was placed by the ſide of the Marquis de Valori, miniſter from the court of France. On his return the King gave him a letter of recommendation to the Princeſs of Brunſwick, his ſiſter, conceived in terms expreſſive of the greateſt eſteem.

What Frederic afterwards did to engage him to reſide at Berlin, in 1750, has been already mentioned, and is well known. Received every where with ſo much diſtinction, living with an illuſtrious Monarch, we may ſay, on terms of the moſt familiar intimacy, ſought after by the Great, and enjoying freedom, even in a court, he continued in uninterrupted poſſeſſion of theſe high favors, till

till his quarrel with Maupertuis. He had alone permiſſion to be ſerved from the King's table, and when the marriage of Prince Henry with the Princeſs of Heſſe Caſſel was celebrated, Voltaire had the honor to dine with the Royal Family.

Even after his diſgrace, the Margraveſs of Bareith honored him with the moſt flattering marks of her friendſhip. That Princeſs was goodneſs itſelf. She it was who, in 1758, reconciled Voltaire to the King of Pruſſia, her brother. That Prince continued afterwards to write letters to him, full of gaiety, wit, and philoſophy; and erected his ſtatue in his beautiful manufactory of Porcelain, with an inſcription moſt proper to flatter his vanity.

The Empreſs of Ruſſia, no leſs attentive to pay her court to a writer whom Fame had made her interpreter, bought watches to the amount of 500000 livres, from the manufactories Voltaire had eſtabliſhed at Fernei.

She ſent Prince Kouloſki to him, to preſent him with ſome magnificent peliſſes, and a box turned by her own hands, ornamented with her portrait, and twenty diamonds. One would have imagined, ſaid Voltaire of himſelf, one was reading the Hiſtory of Aboulcaſſem, in the Arabian Nights Entertainment.

This

This Princeſs, the King of Pruſſia, and ſeveral other ſovereign Princes, who had honored Voltaire with their viſits, or their correſpondence, ſubſcribed towards a ſtatue, which was erected in 1770, by ſeveral of the literati of Paris, and to which J. J. Rouſſeau himſelf alſo contributed: a noble revenge for all the injuries he had ſuffered from the philoſopher of Fernei.

If Voltaire appeared leſs in favor at the court of France than in other foreign courts, he nevertheleſs poſſeſſed great influence there; eſpecially during the miniſtry of Belliſle and Choiſeul. The Marchioneſs of Pompadour always patronized him, ſhe procured him the place of Gentleman in Ordinary, and his title of Hiſtoriographer of France. The rewards he afterwards obtained would have been much more conſiderable, had he reſpected what every good citizen ought to reſpect, religion and morality; but Louis XV. juſtly incenſed againſt him for the dangerous works which continually iſſued from his retirement, thought he ſhould injure Chriſtianity if he appeared to favor one who openly avowed himſelf its enemy. He frequently expreſſed his diſpleaſure ſo as to alarm him, but the menaces he ſometimes uttered, that he would have him impriſoned, continually ceded to the ſolicitations of

of Voltaire's protectors, and the natural good diſpoſition of that monarch.

Before we proceed to the laſt Tranſactions of his Life, we ſhall give a brief Account of his Diſputes with various Bookſellers, and of the Origin of his great Wealth.

M. DE VOLTAIRE, perceiving that bookſellers grew great on the labors of authors, early reſolved to free himſelf from their yoke. He began by printing his works at his own expence, by which means he received all the profits of his labors; but he did not reflect, that the bookſellers, jealous of the gains he made, would oppoſe him all in their power. This was ſoon the caſe; and from the year 1730, M. de Voltaire has been continually embroiled with bookſellers, and perſons they have employed. His firſt diſpute, and that which made the moſt noiſe, was with Francis Jore, a bookſeller of Rouen in Normandy.

In 1731, M. de Voltaire reſided ſeven months in Jore's houſe, in the diſguiſe of an Engliſh nobleman. After having paſſed ſome time in the city, he went into the country to re-eſtabliſh his health, where he lived after the manner of the golden age, on vegetables, new laid eggs, and milk.

M. de

M. de Voltaire ſoon after departed for Paris, making the moſt grateful acknowledgments to his hoſt, and aſſuring him he would ſoon ſet his preſs to work.

After his arrival in the capital, he wrote to Jore to come to him, on an affair of great importance. The bookſeller obeyed, and repaired to the houſe of Madame de Fontaine Martel, with whom M. de Voltaire reſided.

The important buſineſs, he then had in hand, was the publication of the Philoſophical Letters, for which, he ſaid, he had a verbal permiſſion. No ſooner had this book appeared, than it raiſed a diſagreeable clamour againſt the author, but Voltaire found an excellent expedient to extricate himſelf from the difficulty. Jore was at law with Ferrand, a printer at Rouen, for having pirated one of his books, for which he had a privilege. M. de Voltaire therefore adviſed Jore to privately give the manuſcript of this work to Ferrand. He cannot fail, ſaid he, to fall into the ſnare and print it; the edition will immediately be ſeized, and our ſuperiors, informed that the manuſcript was ſtolen from me, will not make me reſponſible for the other editions which may hereafter appear. By this means I ſhall be able to publiſh it without danger, and we ſhall both be ſafe.

A copy

A copy of the edition of Jore, lent to M. de Voltaire, ſerved to reprint from; the whole edition of the bookſeller of Rouen, Jore, was ſeized, and himſelf deprived of his freedom, by arret of council, in September, 1734. Reduced to poverty, he applied to M. de Voltaire to pay him for printing his book. That poet, to ſave himſelf from any proſecution, had written two letters to the magiſtrate who ſuperintended all new publications, in which he accuſed Jore of having publiſhed the edition, notwithſtanding he had offered to make him any indemnification.

He received the bookſeller with great coolneſs and indifference; at length, after ſeveral negociations, he propoſed to pay half the debt. To this Jore, ſince he found he could obtain nothing better, agreed. The illuſtrious poet advanced him a hundred piſtoles, and denied that any more was his due, though he ought to have paid a hundred and forty. It was on this occaſion that his bookſeller publiſhed his famous Memoir, in which he accuſed Voltaire of ſo many unjuſt practices, with regard to the ſale of his works.

This Memoir, ſlanderous either in whole or in part, repreſented M. de Voltaire in colours too odious for him not to endeavor to procure its ſuppreſſion. In this he ſucceeded, but not till he had ſatisfied the bookſeller, who promiſed to write

write a letter by way of reparation. This letter, full of deference, reſpect, and repentance, effaced, in part, the impreſſion made by the facts which had been advanced in the Memoir, relative to the manner in which M. de Voltaire diſpoſed of manuſcripts.

I cannot but own I very much approve of what M. de Voltaire has ſaid of the right every author has to derive a reaſonable profit from his labor, which is as much his due as the rent of an eſtate is due to its owner; he may even write for a livelihood, *ingenii largitor venter*, but his writings ought not to appear dictated by neceſſity. Enterprizing poverty made Horace a poet; yet, in all his works, he is plainly inſpired by the love of glory. An author may alſo ſell his works. Cicero ſold his pleadings. You have ſold my Oration for Ligarius extremely well, ſaid he, in an epiſtle to Atticus. Pope Benedict XIV, in his youth, ſold ſeveral Treatiſes in Divinity to the bookſellers of Venice. Many literati have a ridiculous delicacy on this head; after having ſubſiſted on their productions, they obtain a penſion, and are aſhamed of every thing that reſembles commerce.

A foreign ambaſſador having at his table a philoſopher of Geneva, who maintained himſelf by his literary labors, as a number of court ſycophants do by their ſervility, and ſpeaking of a man

man of the firſt genius, he writes for his bread, ſaid the ambaſſador, contemptuouſly. And for what does your Excellency cypher and decypher, retorted the blunt citizen of Geneva? Why, to give a good dinner to your equals.

M. de Voltaire had an undoubted right to ſell his manuſcripts; but the preſent queſtion is, whether he ſold them too often, or to ſeveral bookſellers at the ſame time. He appears on this head to have been unjuſtly accuſed *. Different bookſellers

* Note by a Bookſeller.

M. de Voltaire had adopted a practice in the ſale of his manuſcripts which, I believe, the bookſellers of Paris will not eaſily be brought to approve, "You ſay, writes he, in a letter to the Abbé "Mouſſinot, that Prault is diſſatisfied: at which I am ſurprized; "he muſt know the printing of foreign editions cannot be prevented. When I wiſh to favor a bookſeller in Holland, I inform him "of any work I may happen to have in the preſs in France, and "endeavor to procure him the firſt copy, that he may get the ſtart "of his brethren in the publication; and therefore have I promiſed "a Dutch bookſeller immediately to ſend him a copy of the work "in queſtion."

Voltaire acted in conformity to theſe principles; for we have two letters of his, dated at Bruſſels, in 1740, in one of which he propoſes the manuſcript of the Anti-Machiavel to Prault, at Paris, and in the other to Van Duren, at the Hague.

"My dear friend, I am going to truſt you with a ſecret. "M. de Chambonin will deliver you a packet, which will be "ſoon followed by another. The whole is a very ſingular "manu-

booksellers have certainly published his works, bu
it is not true, that he *always* derived profit from
these editions. Since the brothers of the name o

" manuscript, written by a still more singular man. It is, as yo
" will see, a refutation of Machiavel, and by an author of the mo
" elevated rank, whose very name, when known, will make th
" fortune of his bookseller. You may make an agreement wit
" Prault, the Son, but you must not take less than a thousan
" crowns; the tenth part of which, if you please, shall be for your
" self. I, for my part, have no share either in the manuscript o
" the profits, &c. &c." *(Letter to the Abbé Moussinot.)*

We will now cite what he wrote on the same subject to the book
seller at the Hague.

" I have by me a very singular manuscript, written by one of th
" most considerable men in Europe. It is a kind of refutation o
" Machiavel's Prince. The work is full of interesting facts an
" bold reflexions, which cannot but engage the curiosity of th
" reader, and insure the profit of the bookseller. I am authorize
" to make a few corrections, and have it printed. I will send yo
" a printed copy in my possession, provided you will engage to hav
" it transcribed, and return me the manuscript. I shall add a pre
" face, and only require of you to print it well, and send two do
" zen copies, magnificently bound, to that German court which
" shall indicate, &c."

Brussels, June 5, 1740.

Thus the bookseller at the Hague, was to pay nothing for th
same work, for which the bookseller at Paris was to give a thousan
crowns. Yet, Voltaire declares, he had no share in the profits; ca
it be supposed they were claimed by the King of Prussia? These tw
letters are not easily reconciled to a strict regard to probity.

Crame

Cramer, became his publiſhers, we have heard of no diſpute of his with any bookſeller whatever. Perhaps, indeed, it had been as well if M. de Voltaire, or his editors, had not made the public purchaſe the ſame things three or four times over. Five or ſix little pieces of his appeared every year, which, at the end of that year, were collected together under the title of *Miſcellanies*. Theſe Miſcellanies were again publiſhed in the Queſtions on the Encyclopedia, and theſe tireſome repetitions offended and wearied the public. It is alſo to be remarked, that in the works which were publiſhed as new ones, there were a hundred things which M. de Voltaire had ſaid and re-ſaid, even thirty or forty times. If this was the privilege of old age, as he alledged, he ought at leaſt to have contrived, that his privilege ſhould have been leſs expenſive to the public.

We forgot, under the article of M. de Voltaire's typographical quarrels, to ſpeak of thoſe which he had with ſome bookſellers in Holland. Ledet, of Amſterdam, affirmed he ſold him the right of printing his works, and afterwards ſold the ſame right to others. Voltaire, on the contrary, pretended he had received nothing either from him or any one elſe. Vanduren, bookſeller at the Hague, who had received from him a copy of the Anti-Machiavel, complains, likewiſe, that

after having given him the copy, he had decried his edition, purpoſely to bring out another for his own profit: but theſe accuſations have not been ſufficiently proved, nor are we in poſſeſſion of ſufficient materials to determine the truth.

Certain it is, however, that the reſentment of the bookſellers burſt forth in a very violent manner in the year 1748. They then publiſhed the Voltairiana, a collection of all the moſt abuſive pieces that had appeared againſt M. de Voltaire. They had even the audacity to ſend a copy, poſt, to the court of King Staniſlaus, where Voltaire then was; but that Prince, highly offended, threw the libel in the fire.

It cannot, however, be denied, that M. de Voltaire is the firſt writer who ever acquired a great fortune without filling any of thoſe poſts which uſually lead to wealth and honors. Order, œconomy, the favor he was in with the Great, and his connections with ſeveral rich financiers, were the real ſources of his opulence.

He inherited a patrimony of a hundred thouſand livres (above four thouſand pounds) with which he bought a life annuity, and thus nearly doubled his income. His brother, the Treaſurer of the Chamber of Accounts, dying in 1741, he ſucceeded to the greater part of what he poſſeſſed. Thus, independent of any other acquiſitions he

he poſſeſſed, by inheritance, a very conſiderable fortune.

The ſubſcription for the Henriade, publiſhed at London in 1726, produced him fifty thouſand crowns (6,250 pounds) which he laid out in a lottery eſtabliſhed by M. des Forts, Comptroller General of the Finances; the tickets of this lottery were to be paid for in ready money, and the prizes were to conſiſt of annuities, in ſuch a manner that any ſociety which ſhould have bought all the tickets, would have gained a million of livres. Voltaire joined a numerous club, and proved fortunate.

He afterwards obtained a ſhare in a contract to furniſh the army with proviſions, during the war in Italy, in 1733, which brought him ſeven hundred thouſand livres (near thirty thouſand pounds) and with which he likewiſe purchaſed annuities. To this M. Marchand alludes, when he ſays, M. de Voltaire had found means to keep himſelf from ſtarving, by undertaking to furniſh other with food.

He enjoyed penſions from ſeveral Sovereigns; one of twelve hundred livres (fifty pounds a year) from the Queen of France; another from the King, without including his ſalary as Hiſtoriographer of France.

The King of Pruſſia, when he went to Berlin, gave him a yearly penſion of twenty-three thouſand livres (nine hundred and fifty pounds.) When he left the dominions of that Prince, in 1753, he lodged five hundred thouſand livres (above twenty thouſand pounds) in the hand of M. Tronchin, a banker at Lyons, the fruits of his Majeſty's generoſity, and the profits he had made by his writings in Pruſſia and elſewhere.

He was ſecretly concerned in ſeveral branches of commerce. He had a ſhare in a rich houſe at Cadiz, which was very ſucceſsful, and was concerned with ſeveral bookſellers, in different publications. He was connected with M. de Molin in the corn trade, and the Abbé Mouſſinot in the ſale of pictures. He adviſed all his brethren of the pen not to cultivate literature alone, but uſe their endeavors to effect a union between Plutus and Apollo: and continually told the ſtate reformers, who abound in the coffee-houſes of Paris, that a commercial ſcheme, which procured the ſpeculator all the conveniences of life, was infinitely ſuperior to a political one.

What contributed very much to augment M. de Voltaire's fortune, was his living ſo long without keeping houſe: and that afterwards, when he did keep one, he ſeldom expended above a third of his income, and ſometimes not ſo much

All his domeſtics, latterly, conſiſted only of an amauenſis, a woman who waited on him, a cook-maid, wo lackeys, one of whom ſerved him for coachman, and Father Adam, who was overſeer of the oultry. He indeed employed a great number of orkmen about his grounds, and ſome of them ccaſionally ſerved within doors.

Though M. de Voltaire made large profits, he kewiſe met with no inconſiderable loſſes. He oſt by the bankruptcy of the Jew, Medina, at ondon, forty thouſand livres (above ſixteen hunred pounds;) and by M. de Molin, whom we entioned before, twenty-four thouſand (a thouand pounds.) He alſo loſt a very capital ſum y M. Michel, Receiver General of the Finances.

On this latter loſs, he wrote as follows to the bbé Mouſſinot, "I confeſs I did not foreſee this bankruptcy, not conceiving ſuch an accident could poſſibly befall a Receiver General of the Finances to his moſt Chriſtian Majeſty. You will find, however, that his children will be very rich, and preferred to lucrative poſts. The Preſident of the Grand Council will ſit in judgment on me, if I ſhould happen to have a cauſe come before his auguſt tribunal. His brother, the Intendant of the King's Amuſements, ſhall have it in his power to prevent my pieces being played at Verſailles; while I, half poet, half

"philoſopher,

" philoſopher, muſt reſt contented with the loſs
" of my money, without judging any man, or en-
" joying any place."

Every loſs M. de Voltaire ſuffered, gave him an opportunity of preſſing his debtors. With people of an inferior claſs, he had at once recourſe to the bailiff, while, to the Great, he behaved with a kind of reſpectful pleaſantry. " You tell
" me, ſays he, in a letter to the Prince de Guiſe,
" that you have always paid M. Crozat with great
" punctuality. This to me is a cruel diſtinction.
" M. Crozat, who has a hundred thouſand crowns
" a year, is paid exactly to the day; while I,
" becauſe I am not rich, muſt remain four years
" in arrears. Alas! Monſeigneur, I do not re-
" queſt thoſe regular payments you make to
" *Cræſus* Crozat, I only beg you would not en-
" tirely forget that ſomething is owing to *Iro*
" Voltaire."

The Order of our Work now conducts us to the laſt Stage of M. de VOLTAIRE's Life; to relate the Occaſion of his Return to Paris; the Reſpect ſhewn him there; his Profeſſion of Faith; and his Death and Burial.

THOUGH Voltaire celebrated the happineſs he enjoyed at Fernei both in proſe and verſe, he certainly ſometimes was tired of his ſolitude, ſince he undertook, at the age of eighty-four, and

the depth of winter, to make a journey to Paris. The general opinion was, that he continued to reſide at the foot of the Alps againſt his will; and this opinion hurt him the more, becauſe his enemies frequently ſpoke of him as an exile, and travellers who viſited him, when diſguſted with ſome little pettiſhneſs, would frequently dare to remind him of theſe reports.

Thus, it is ſaid, that having once aſked a perſon, who continued longer at Fernei than was conſiſtent with the laws of hoſpitality, *When he intended to depart for Paris.* *Sir*, anſwered his gueſt, *I can depart for Paris whenever I pleaſe.* Some people, however, conteſt the truth of this anecdote, and aſſert it took its riſe from Voltaire's having ſaid of a traveller, who made too long a ſtay with him, *Don Quixote took inns for caſtles; but Mr. ** takes caſtles for inns.* Whether theſe ſtories are true or falſe, the enemies of Voltaire frequently upbraided him with his ſuppoſed exile, and affirmed, he only pretended to be fond of a retreat, of which he was an inhabitant by conſtraint.

To increaſe theſe mortifications, the Emperor had paſſed by his door, and never honored him with a viſit. Voltaire had flattered himſelf he ſhould receive this mark of diſtinction. He long waited for him in his veſtibulum, with his robe de

de chambre, and habited as he uſually was when he expected to be viſited by the Great. His advanced age, his ill ſtate of health, whether feigned or real, and his great abilities ſeemed to excuſe the familiarities in which he indulged himſelf on ſuch occaſions.

Voltaire was the more mortified at being thus diſdained, as we may ſay, by this illuſtrious Monarch, becauſe, when at Geneva, the Emperor had viſited ſeveral of the learned men in that city. From that time his whole endeavors were bent once more to return to Paris, for which city he departed the beginning of February 1778, and he arrived there on the tenth of the ſame month. His firſt care was to fulfil the duties of friendſhip, he went on foot to viſit the Comte d'Argental, who, for fifty ſucceſſive years, had done his utmoſt to promote his glory, and protect his perſon. He was, ſaid Voltaire, born to increaſe the harmony of ſouls, as was Rameau the harmony of ſounds.

The eagerneſs to ſee him was general. It became a kind of epidemic phrenzy. His chamber reſembled the levee of a miniſter of ſtate. Some did not ſo much as tell their names, others were ſatisfied with being in his company, merely that they might repeat among his admirers, *I have ſeen! I have heard!* The enthuſiaſm of his parti-

ſans

ſans was compared by the writer of a journal to that with which the Dalay-Lama inſpires his adorers. Every trifling pleaſantry was carefully collected. Voltaire uttered many that were excellent, but the conſtraint put on him, by the deſire and neceſſity of being always witty, rendered his manner far from natural, in the eyes of people of rank, whoſe converſation, at once ſimple and poignant, is always diſtinguiſhed by an elevated familiarity.

Voltaire, however, liberally complimented all his complimenters. He told the comedians, 'Hereafter I ſhall only live for you, and by you.' To ſome, he ſaid, they had firſt taught him to be vain; to others, they had given him a more lively ſenſation of gratitude. One had celebrated him like Horace; another, was a ſecond Ovid. But the actors and actreſſes were the principal objects of his attention.

One of the motives for his journey was, to have his tragedy of Irene repreſented. This piece he had lately compoſed, or retouched, for it is pretended it had been written ten years. He was ardent to prove, by this work, which contains ſome beautiful verſes, that age had not diminiſhed his poetic fire. He wholly employed himſelf in declaiming with and inſtructing the actors who were to perform in his piece, and he did this with ſo much exertion that he vomited blood. An accident

accident ſo alarming, to a man of his years, gave birth to difficulties which had not perhaps been foreſeen. It was thought neceſſary to call in the miniſters of religion to his aid. The Abbé Gaultier, an Ex-Jeſuit, came unaſked, and with the more confidence, becauſe he had made a convert of a famous epicurean.

The following relation is in the Abbé's own words.

An exact Copy of the Memoir which the Abbé Gaultier preſented to the Archbiſhop of Paris, containing the particulars of the Death of M. DE VOLTAIRE.

" YOUR Grace has deſired a faithful relation of " all that paſſed between me and M. de Voltaire, " from his arrival in Paris till his death. As no " one is better able to gratify this wiſh than my- " ſelf, I ſhall endeavor to ſupply the information " your Grace is pleaſed to requeſt.

" Monſieur de Voltaire arrived at Paris the " beginning of February 1778, and took up his " reſidence at the Marquis de Villette's, on the " Quai des Theatins. Vaſt multitudes crowded " to ſee this celebrated man. Nothing was talked " of in Paris but M. de Voltaire. Eulogiums " were written on him in proſe and in verſe. I

" cannot

" cannot but confeſs it gave me great pain to " ſee a man ſo honored, and almoſt adored, whoſe " abilities had been employed to blaſpheme reli- " gion and deſtroy every moral obligation. My " uneaſineſs increaſed when I conſidered how " much it was to be feared that a perſon ſo dan- " gerous ſhould, by his preſence, give new vigor " to infidelity. I prayed the Omnipotent to pre- " vent the miſchief this patriarch of infidels might " cauſe in the capital, and at laſt determined to " write to this ſcourge of his country, which I did " in the following terms:

LETTER from the Abbé GAULTIER to M. DE VOLTAIRE.

" SIR,

" You have many admirers, and, ſhould your " wiſhes fortunately meet mine, I may, as I " moſt ardently deſire to be, become one of " the number. I will explain myſelf more ful- " ly, if you will grant me a moment's conver- " ſation. I am one of the moſt unworthy of " the miniſters of Chriſt, but I ſhall ſay nothing " unbecoming my profeſſion, or which ought not " to give you pleaſure. Though I do not flat- " ter myſelf you will indulge me in what I " ſhould eſteem ſo great a happineſs, I ſhall

" not

" not fail to remember you, when I celebrate the " moſt holy ſacrifice of the maſs. I ſhall fer- " vently pray to the juſt and merciful God for " the ſalvation of your immortal ſoul, which per- " haps is on the very point of rendering an ac- " count of all its actions. Pardon me, Sir, for " the liberty I have taken; my intention is to " render you the greateſt of all ſevices, which I " may do, by the aſſiſtance of him who has or- " dained that weak things ſhall confound the " ſtrong. How happy ſhould I eſteem myſelf, " if your anſwer ſhould prove analogous to the " ſentiments with which I remain, &c.

" Signed, GAULTIER,
" Prieſt."

" Paris, Feb. 20, 1778.

M. DE VOLTAIRE'S Anſwer.

" YOUR letter, Sir, appears to me that of an " honeſt man, which is ſufficient to determine " me to receive the honor of your viſit, on the " day and hour moſt agreeable to yourſelf. I ſhall " addreſs you in the ſame language which I uſed " when I gave my benediction to the grandſon " of the ſage and illuſtrious Franklin, the moſt " reſpectable man of America; I uttered only " theſe words, *God and liberty.* All who were " preſent

" preſent ſhed tears; I flatter myſelf your prin-
" ciples are the ſame. I am eighty-four years
" of age, and muſt ſoon appear before God, the
" Creator of all worlds. If you have any thing to
" communicate, I ſhall conſider it as my duty and
" an honcr to pay you every attention, notwith-
" ſtanding the bodily pains under which I ſuffer.

" I have the honor to be, &c.

" Signed, DE VOLTAIRE."

" Paris, Feb. 21, 1778.

" The ſame day, that is, the 21ſt of February, I
" paid a viſit to M. de Voltaire. There was a great
" number of perſons in the chamber of audience,
" waiting to ſpeak to him; he ſpent, however, but
" two or three minutes with them, alledging that
" he was in exceſſive pain, and not in a condition to
" ſee any body. As he retired, he took me by the
" hand, and deſired me to follow him. He led me
" into his chamber, made me ſit down by him, and
" aſked me, what it was I wiſhed to ſay. I returned
" him my anſwer nearly in the following words:
" The deſire of knowing the moſt celebrated
" man of this age has occaſioned my taking the
" liberty to write to you; I have not the honor
" of a perſonal acquaintance with you, but I
" am extremely intimate with a friend of yours,
M. de

" M. de Lattaignant, and I dare flatter myſelf I
" poſſeſs his confidence. His infirmities, and his
" great age, have led him to make thoſe reflec-
" tions which every thinking perſon ought to
" make, when he prepares himſelf to appear be-
" fore God, and which I have no doubt you have
" frequently made yourſelf. If my miniſtry may
" prove agreeable to you, you have only to ſpeak,
" and I will conform myſelf to your wiſhes; I
" am not the only one in Paris who can render
" you this ſervice; you may, doubtleſs, find mi-
" niſters much more worthy than myſelf.

" He heard me with great attention, and as
" ſoon as I had ended, aſked me, whether what
" I had done originated entirely with myſelf. I
" replied, yes, which was really the truth. Are
" you not ſent, ſaid he, by the Archbiſhop, or
" the Curate of St. Sulpice. No, I aſſure you, ſaid
" I; ſhould my proceeding be diſagreeable to you,
" I have no doubt of your indulgence; if, on
" the contrary, you approve of it, the Lord be
" praiſed. He ſaid, he was very glad to hear
" I did not act under any other perſon's di-
" rections, and aſked me, what I had been, and
" who I was. I told him, I had been a Je-
" ſuit during ſeventeen, and curate of St. Mard,
" in the dioceſe of Rouen, for near twenty years;
" that, at preſent, I was employed in miniſterial
" func-

" functions at Paris, and celebrated maſs every
" day at the Hoſpital for Incurables *.

" M. de Voltaire made me ſeveral offers of his
" ſervices, but as I thought much leſs of the
" tranſitory rewards of this world, than that eter-
" nal recompence which God has prepared for
" his elect, I ſaid to him, ah, Sir, how well
" ſhould I eſteem myſelf rewarded by your con-
" verſion; the merciful God deſires not your de-
" ſtruction, return therefore to him, ſince he is
" willing to return to you. M. de Voltaire,
" apparently affected by theſe words, ſaid he
" loved God. I replied, that was a great thing,
" but that it was neceſſary it ſhould produce
" ſome fruits, for inactive love could never be
" the true love of that God who is the principle
" of action.

* The titles of Chaplain of the Incurables, and Confeſſor to the Abbé Lattaignant and M. de Voltaire, which have been beſtowed on the Abbé Gaultier, gave birth to the following epigram:

Voltaire and Lattaignant, both of a trade,
To one confeſſor, one confeſſion made;
Of two ſuch penitents it can't avail,
Who the confeſſor was, or what their tale;
And yet had Gaultier an undoubted claim
To theſe high honors, this unhop'd for fame;
The cure of two ſuch ſouls belongs, we own,
To Chaplains of Incurables alone.

" M. de

" M. de Voltaire ſaid ſeveral other things, " which I anſwered in ſuch a manner as appear- " ed ſatisfactory. Our converſation was inter- " rupted by three different perſons. Mr. Abbé, " ſaid the firſt, let me beg you to conclude what " you have to ſay; you ſee M. de Voltaire vomits " blood, and is unable to ſpeak any longer. M. " de Voltaire replied, with vivacity, *Sir, let me " requeſt you will not deprive me of the Abbé's company, " he is my friend, and does not flatter me.* About " three quarters of an hour afterwards Madame " Denis came, and ſaid to me, with great mild- " neſs, Mr. Abbé, let me entreat you to leave " what you have farther to ſay till another op- " portunity, my uncle muſt be much fatigued.

" I then took my leave, after aſking permiſ- " ſion to call and ſee him occaſionally, which he " very readily granted. I aſſured him, that I " ſhould remember him every day in the ſacri- " fice of the maſs. He thanked me, and ap- " peared very much affected. Adieu, M. de Vol- " taire, ſaid I, as I left him, be certain you " have not in the world a better friend than my- " ſelf.

" I directly went to give an account of what " had paſſed to the Curate of St. Sulpice, and alſo " to the Abbé de l'Ecluſe, Vicar General to your " Grace. I told them, that it was probable M.

" de

" de Voltaire would have recourſe to my miniſtry,
" and deſired inſtructions how to act in that caſe.
" They gave me their advice, to which I have
" ſtrictly conformed. After which I inceſſantly
" employed myſelf in praying, and procuring
" the prayers of others, for the converſion of M.
" de Voltaire.

" The 26th of February, I was agreeably ſur-
" prized to receive a note from M. de Voltaire, in
" the following terms:

" You promiſed me, Sir, to come and converſe
" with me. You will greatly oblige me by taking
" that trouble as ſoon as poſſible. Signed, Vol-
" taire, at Paris, February 26, 1778.

" I received this note about nine in the even-
" ing, and another the next morning, from Ma-
" dame Denis, of which the following is a copy:

" Madame Denis, niece to M. de Voltaire,
" preſents her compliments to the Abbé Gaultier,
" and would be much obliged to him if he would
" call on her uncle.

" February, 27, 1778, At the houſe
" of the Marquis de Villette.

" On the 27th of February, as ſoon as I had
" celebrated maſs, I went to the Marquis de Vil-

" lette's, to ſee M. de Voltaire; on that day I had
" only an opportunity to ſpeak to Madame Denis,
" who told me, that the Curate of St. Sulpice
" had been to adviſe M. de Voltaire not to
" defer confeſſion, and that he had anſwered he
" committed himſelf entirely to me. After this
" viſit I went to give an account of what I had
" done to the Curate of St. Sulpice.

" On the Second of March, 1778, I again vi-
" ſited M. de Voltaire, who was then attacked
" with a vomiting of blood. Before I entered
" his chamber, I was adviſed not to terrify him,
" but ſpeak to him with mildneſs. Marechal de
" Richelieu, who had juſt left him, charged me
" not to neglect my duty towards him, and I pro-
" miſed I would adminiſter every ſpiritual aſſiſt-
" ance in my power. I then went into M. de
" Voltaire's apartment: he took me by the hand
" and requeſted me to confeſs him before he died
" I replied, I would willingly hear his confeſſion
" and that I had ſpoken of it to the Curate of St
" Sulpice, whoſe pariſhioner he was, who had
" granted me his permiſſion; but that he muſt
" firſt make a recantation of his errors. I will im-
" mediately write one, Sir, anſwered he, with
" my own hand, which ſhall give you perfect
" ſatisfaction; bring me pen, ink, and paper
" and let me be left alone with my good
" friend

" friend the Abbé Gaultier. He was accordingly " obeyed, every body retired, and he immediate- " ly wrote the following:

" *I, the underwritten, declare, that having been at-* " *tacked during four months with a vomiting of blood,* " *at the age of eighty-four, and unable to drag myſelf to* " *church, the Curate of St. Sulpice has added, to his other* " *good actions, that of ſending to me the Abbé Gaultier,* " *a prieſt, to whom I have confeſſed myſelf, truſting,* " *ſhould God take me under his protection, I ſhall die* " *in the Catholic faith, in which I was born, and pray-* " *ing the divine mercy to pardon all my errors: and if* " *I have ever brought a reproach upon religion, I aſk* " *pardon of God and the church. Signed, Voltaire,* " *March 2, 1778, in the houſe of the Marquis de Vil-* " *lette, in preſence of the Abbé Mignot, my nephew, and* " *the Marquis de Villevieille, my friend.*

" M. de Voltaire then begged me to call in the Abbé Mignot, and the Marquis de Villevieille, to hear this paper read and ſigned, which they accordingly did. He likewiſe wrote with his own hand as follows:

" *Having been informed, by the Abbé Gaultier, it has been aſſerted, in a certain ſociety, that I had proteſted againſt whatever I might do at my death, I hereby declare I never made uſe of any ſuch expreſſion, and*

" *that it is an old piece of pleaſantry, falſely aſcribed*
" *long ago to many learned men, who were more enligh-*
" *tened than Voltaire.*

" M. de Voltaire, when he gave me this re-
" tractation, ſaid, in the preſence of the Abbé Mig-
" not and Villevieille: you, no doubt, intend, Mr.
" Abbé, immediately to inſert it in the journals:
" I have no objection. I replied that it was not yet
" time. He then aſked me, whether I was ſatis-
" fied? I told him, that this retractation did not
" appear to me ſufficiently ample, but that I
" would communicate it to your Grace, which I
" did, but which you likewiſe did not think ſuf-
" ficient. I left a copy of it at your Grace's cha-
" teau de Conflans, where you then were.

" I alſo went to the Curate of St. Sulpice, to
" let him know how I had proceeded, and left
" him a copy of this retractation, which he did not
" think ſatisfactory. At the ſame time I gave
" him a note from M. de Voltaire, in which he
" promiſed him ſix hundred livres for the poor of
" his pariſh *.

" Of

* The Abbé Gaultier having been informed the partizans of Voltaire had reported, that he had appropriated, to his own uſe the ſix hundred livres which M. de Voltaire had remitted him for the poor of the pariſh of St. Sulpice, has inſerted, in his Me-

moi

" On the next day, the third of March, I returned to M. de Voltaire, to engage him to make a retractation leſs equivocal and more circumſtantial *; but the porter told me, I could not " ſee

noir, an acknowledgment for the receipt of the money given by the Curate of the ſaid pariſh, which is as follows: ' *I hereby certify, that the Abbé Gaultier, prieſt, remitted to me, during the firſt illneſs of M. de Voltaire, a codicil to the will of the ſaid Sieur Voltaire, in his own hand writing, by which he bequeaths, to the poor of my pariſh, the ſum of ſix hundred livres. Witneſs my hand,*

' DE TERSSAC, *Curate of St. Sulpice.*'

Paris, Sept. 10, 1778.

* The profeſſion of faith, made by M. de Voltaire, being thought inſufficient, the thing in agitation was to procure a better, and this was what the Curate of St. Sulpice had in view, in requeſting to ſee M. de Voltaire, who, lodging in his pariſh, had become one of his flock: but he choſe to elude every kind of explanation with his paſtor. He wrote to him on the fourth of March, as follows:

" REVEREND SIR,

" THE Marquis de la Villette has aſſured me, that if I had taken the liberty to addreſs myſelf immediately to you, with regard to the neceſſary ſtep I have taken, you would have had the goodneſs to leave the important occupations in which you are engaged, to fulfil towards me thoſe functions I thought only ſuitable to ſubalterns, conſidering I was a ſtranger, and reſiding but for a time within your pariſh. The Abbé Gaultier wrote to me as ſoon as he heard of my illneſs; he afterwards came to offer me his ſervices, and I was led to believe, that being a reſident of your pariſh, it might be by your " deſire,

" ſee him. I plainly perceived with whom thes
" orders originated, for when I left M. de Vol
" taire, on the evening before, Meſſieurs D'Alem
" bert, Diderot and Marmontel, very openly tes
" tified their diſſatisfaction at my preſence. Afte
" having returned ſeveral times to no purpoſe
" I wrote the following letter to M. de Voltaire:

" deſire. I conſider you, Sir, as a perſon of the higheſt conſe
" quence in the ſtate. I well know you are an apoſtle to th
" poor, you comfort them, and labour in your vocation for the
" benefit. The greater eſteem I feel for your character, the mo
" fearful am I to abuſe your kindneſs. I remember the reſpe
" due to your birth, your merit, and your function as a miniſte
" You are a general, I requeſt only a ſoldier. I hope you wi
" forgive my not having foreſeen that condeſcenſion which cou
" induce you to deſcend even to me: Pardon me, likewiſe, fo
" having troubled you with this letter. It will not be neceſſar
" for you to take the pains to anſwer it, your time is too pre
" cious.

" I have the honor to be, &c."

All theſe compliments ſhew the new convert to have dreaded a viſit from his curate, and that he was convinced his faith was no ſufficiently eſtabliſhed to undergo any vigorous examination.

The Curate of St. Sulpice returned the ſame day a very reſpectfu anſwer, but which produced no change in M. de Voltaire's manne of thinking; he at firſt feared that the government would oblige hi to return immediately to Fernei; he endeavored to appeaſe tho whom his ſtay at Paris alarmed, but, as ſoon as he thought himſe out of danger, he refuſed them admittance.

" Sir

" SIR,

" I WISH much to hear from you. I have " called frequently at your hotel, but without " effect. I have always been told, you were not " to be ſpoken with. I wiſh nothing ſo much as " the re-eſtabliſhment of your health. I never " fail to pray, when I celebrate the holy ſacrifice " of the maſs, that God, of his goodneſs, would " beſtow on you many happy days. Be aſſured, " Sir, no one can feel more ſincere or more ar- " dent wiſhes for your welfare. If you will per- " mit me to reviſit you, I will, then, amply ex- " plain what I cannot expreſs in this letter, which, " believe me, is dictated from the heart, and " not from the head.

" I have the honor to be, &c.

" Signed, GAULTIER."

" Paris, March 13, 1778.

" M. de Voltaire anſwered this letter by the " following note;

" The maſter of the houſe has ordered the porter " not to admit any eccleſiaſtic, except the curate " of St. Sulpice. When the patient ſhall have " better recovered his health, he will take a plea- " ſure in receiving a viſit from the Abbé Gaultier.

" Signed, DE VOLTAIRE."

" Paris, March 15, 1778.

" A week

" A week after this I went to enquire concerning
" his health; the porter anſwered, I could by no
" means ſpeak to him. I was informed, how-
" ever, that he was much better, and I wrote to
" him in the following words:

" SIR,

" I HAVE made many enquiries after your health,
" from thoſe who frequently ſee you; and they
" tell me you are much better. No one can
" more ſincerely deſire its perfect eſtabliſhment
" than myſelf. I never forget you in my prayers;
" if they are efficacious, you will experience
" their happy effects. I have ſeveral times been
" at your hotel, to congratulate you on your re-
" covery, but could never gain admiſſion. The
" interpretation of which refuſals it is impoſ-
" ſible to miſtake; eſpecially after your having
" written to me, that you would ſee me again
" with pleaſure, as ſoon as you were ſomething
" better. I ſhall ceaſe my importunities at your
" door, for it is uſeleſs to knock at any other
" door than that of your heart; at which I am
" ſure I have had admiſſion. How great would
" be my happineſs could I become inſtrumental
" in bringing you acquainted with what alone
" conſtitutes true happineſs. I have the honour
" to be, &c. Signed, GAULTIER."

" Paris, March 30, 1778.

" M. d

" M. de Voltaire returned no anſwer to this let-
" ter, which determined me to pay him no more
" viſits. During almoſt two months, M. de
" Voltaire did ſeveral things which were not very
" pleaſing to me, and which I might perhaps have
" prevented, had I been permitted to converſe
" with him freely *. His diſeaſe again attacked
" him about the end of the month of May. On the
" twenty-ninth I was told, that M. de Voltaire
" was not expected to recover. I then thought it
" my duty to write him an affectionate letter,
" once more to recall the good reſolution he had
" formed to his mind. The following is a copy:

" I learn, Sir, from public report, that you
" are dangerouſly ill. This news afflicts me much:
" but what increaſes my grief, is, that I have
" heard nothing further from you. Though every

* It was during this interval that Voltaire was crowned, at the theatre, where he received the honors of a kind of apotheoſis. Juſt before the riſing of the curtain, Briſard, the oldeſt of the actors, accompanied by his brethren, came into the box of Voltaire, and placed on his head a laurel crown. The poet, tranſported, took off the crown, exclaiming, with a kind of aſtoniſhment, *What! will you overwhelm me, kill me with exceſs of glory!* The tragedy of Irene was afterwards acted, and, at the concluſion of the piece, the ſtatue of Voltaire was exhibited on the ſtage, ſurrounded by the actors and actreſſes, who each placed on it a crown of laurel.

" effort

" effort I made, after your laſt illneſs, to gain ad-
" miſſion was ineffectual, the remembrance of
" that ſhall not impede my return, ſhould ſuch
" be your wiſh. Should the Almighty be pleaſed
" to call you hence, how happy would it be for
" you, were you prepared to appear before him
" who is the great judge of judges: and how de-
" plorable your ſtate, ſhould you be cut off ere you
" had properly reflected on the grand work of ſal-
" vation! Ah! my dear Sir, think ſeriouſly of this
" important matter; and of this only. Take advan-
" tage of the little time you have to live. Time
" with you will ſoon be paſt: and eternity will
" commence.

" I have the honor to be, &c.

" Signed, GAULTIER."

" Paris, May 30, 1778.

" Scarcely had M. de Voltaire received this let-
" ter, when, on the ſame day, about ſix in the
" evening, the Abbé Mignot, Counſellor of the
" Grand Council, and nephew to M. de Voltaire,
" came himſelf to requeſt I would hear the con-
" feſſion of his uncle. Your laſt letter, ſaid he,
" has made a great impreſſion on him; he is de-
" ſirous to confeſs, and will only confeſs himſelf
" to you. I replied, that I would willingly con-
" feſs M. de Voltaire, provided he made the fol-

" lowing

" lowing recantation, which I read to him, and " which received his approbation:

" I retract whatever I may have ſaid, done, " or written, repugnant to morality, or againſt " the Chriſtian religion, in which I have had the " happineſs to be born; againſt the adorable per- " ſon of Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe divinity I am ac- " cuſed of having attacked; and againſt his church, " in the boſom of which I deſire to die; making " this preſent reparation in the face of the world, " which I have offended by works that have for " ſo many years back appeared under my name; " and this reparation is not the conſequence of " the decay of my intellects, enfeebled by old " age, but of the Grace of Jeſus Chriſt, of which " I was ſo unworthy, and which has opened my " eyes to the horrible danger I have been led into, " by the delirium of my imagination.

" I deſire that this recantation may be in- " ſerted in all the journals and gazettes in Eu- " rope; in order that it may become as public as " the offences I have committed, and which I am " deſirous to repair, as far as the ſhort remains " of life will permit. Signed at Paris, this thir- " teenth of May, 1778, in the preſence of the " Curate of St. Sulpice and the Abbé Gaultier.

" The

" The Abbé Mignot † promiſed me that his " uncle ſhould ſign this retractation. I then told " him, that I ſhould be very happy if the curate " of St. Sulpice might be preſent, when M. de " Voltaire retracted; and we went to the houſe " of that worthy paſtor, who willingly agreed to " accompany us. Before we entered the chamber " of M. de Voltaire, I read the retractation I had " drawn up to the Marquis de Villette, who ſaid " it met with his entire approbation.

" We then entered the apartment of M. de " Voltaire; the curate of St. Sulpice deſired to " ſpeak with him firſt, but M. de Voltaire did " not ſeem to know him. I then endeavored to " ſpeak to him in my turn. He ſeized my hand, and " ſhewed ſigns of confidence and friendſhip; but " I was much ſurprized, to hear him ſay to me, " Mr. Abbé Gaultier, I beg you would make my " compliments to the Abbé Gaultier. He con- " tinued to ſay ſeveral other unconnected things. " As I perceived he was delirious, I ſaid nothing " to him either of his confeſſion or his retractation. " I requeſted thoſe about him to let me know " if his reaſon returned, which they promiſed " me; but, alas! I was informed, the next day, " that he expired three hours after we had left

† The Abbé Mignot, a reſpectable magiſtrate, did all in his power to perſuade M. de Voltaire to die as became a Chriſtian.

" him,

" him, that is, the 30th of May, 1778, about " eleven at night *. If I had imagined he would " have died ſo ſoon, I would never have left " him, but have done my utmoſt to give him " ſpiritual aſſiſtance. He died therefore without " the ſacraments! God grant he may not have " died without a ſincere deſire to receive them, " and an unfeigned intent to retract the impieties " of his life.

" This, may it pleaſe your Grace, is a faith- " ful relation of the death of M. de Voltaire †.

" So

* After the departure of the curate of St. Sulpice, and the Abbé Gaultier, M. Tronchin, Voltaire's phyſician, found his patient in moſt violent agonies, crying out, with all his ſtrength, " I am deſerted both by God and Men!" Dr. Tronchin, who has related this fact to ſeveral reſpectable perſons, could not forbear adding, " I wiſh all thoſe who have been ſeduced by the " writings of Voltaire had been witneſſes of his end: ſuch a " ſight muſt have converted them."

† This Memoir of the Abbé Gaultier being publiſhed at Paris, was thought ſpurious by many, and, among others, by M. de la Lande, who, to be ſatisfied of the truth, wrote the following letter to the Abbé Gaultier.

SIR,

A MEMOIR has been publiſhed in your name, at Paris, containing an account of the death of Voltaire; there are in it ſeveral letters which but little reſemble his manner of writing. It aſſerts, that you never heard him confeſs, nor ever granted him a certificate of confeſſion;

" So deplorable an end ought to convince ſinners " of the danger of deferring their converſion to " their laſt moments.

" I have the honor to be,
" With the moſt profound reſpect,
" Your Grace's moſt humble
" And moſt obedient ſervant,

" Paris, June 1, 1778.

" GAULTIER, Prieſt."

confeſſion; that though you were requeſted to come and confeſs him, you did not find him in a proper condition, and that you had ſince been refuſed admittance. Suffer me, Sir, to aſk you, whether this Memoir be really yours; and if it be true, that you never gave him any certificate of confeſſion. A Memoir like this may well be expected to excite the curioſity of a perſon attached to literature, and a pupil and friend of the Jeſuits. I cannot doubt therefore but you will inform me how far I may depend on its authenticity, and hope you are convinced I am, with all reſpect,

Yours, &c.

Oct. 12, 1778. DE LA LANDE,
Of the Academy of Sciences, at the College Royal, Place de Cambray.]

The Abbé Gaultier, in anſwer to this letter, aſſured M. de la Lande, that the Memoir in queſtion was by him, and promiſed to ſhew him the original letters, ſigned by Voltaire, as well as the retractation, written in his own hand. M. de la Lande went to the Abbé Gaultier, and ſatisfied himſelf with regard to the authenticity of the Memoir.

As

As ſoon as the death of M. de Voltaire became public, it was likewiſe known the Archbiſhop determined to refuſe him the rites of eccleſiaſtical interment. This reſolution was much approved of by many, and was juſtified by M. Linguet ſome time after in his Annals.

This determination not to ſuffer M. de Voltaire to be buried in conſecrated ground, at Paris, obliged his family to have recourſe to expedients to procure the body to be interred elſewhere. They obtained from the Abbé Gaultier a certificate, dated the 30th of May, which teſtified, *He came at the requiſition of M. de Voltaire to hear his confeſſion, but that he found him incapable of the act.* The curate of St. Sulpice likewiſe gave a written conſent, dated on the ſame day, *That the body of M. de Voltaire might be carried away without ceremony, and that he willingly renounced all his dues.*

The relations of M. de Voltaire, having procured theſe papers, pretended they would tranſport the body to Fernei, though that was by no means their intention. They carried it to Scellieres, an abbey of the Bernardines, in the dioceſe of Troyes in Champagne, where his obſequies were celebrated on the ſecond of June, by the prior curate, aſſiſted by four other curates of the neighbourhood, and ſome vicars. The biſhop of Troyes, having been informed that the body of

the

the great patriarch of modern free-thinkers had been carried to Scellieres, immediately ſent an order to forbid its interment. The order, however, arrived too late, for the Prior had already finiſhed the ceremony. It was agreed that the body ſhould not be taken up again; but the Biſhop laid the chapel, in which it was buried, under an interdiction, and the Prior of Scellieres was depoſed by his General.

A wit, on this occaſion, wrote the following epitaph for Voltaire:

HIC INTER MONACHOS QUIESCIT, QUI NUNQUAM CONTRA MONACHOS QUIEVIT*.

As however the cuſtom and ſtatutes of the French Academy required a funeral ſervice to be performed for every Academician, M. d'Alembert aſked the Cordeliers of Paris, and perhaps others of the religious, to perform this pious office for M. de Voltaire, but they refuſed. "If the Cor-
"deliers (ſays M. Linguet) had ſuffered them-
"ſelves to be prevailed on by the Secretary of the
"academy, this would have afforded a new topic
"of mirth for the feaſts of the philoſophers, who
"would not have failed to ridicule a maſs, ſung
"by the Monks for hire, at the requeſt of M.

* Here, among the Monks, reſts he who never ſuffered Monks to reſt.

d'Alem-

« d'Alembert, for the repoſe of the ſoul of M. de « Voltaire." It was therefore thought highly improper to furniſh them with this new ſubject for raillery.

The partiſans of M. de Voltaire complained loudly, but certainly without reaſon. The clergy did not prevent ſtatues from being erected to him at the theatre, his eulogium to be propoſed as the ſubject for the prize of the academy, or mauſoleums to be built for him at his chateaus. But they would not permit the aſhes of the faithful to be mingled with the remains of a man whoſe whole life had been devoted to the propagation of his irreligious tenets; a man whoſe old age appeared heated with impious phrenzy, and who, the nearer he approached the tomb, ſeemed to manifeſt a more violent hatred againſt religion and its miniſters. Theſe are the reflexions of M. Linguet, nor are they eaſily anſwered.

ANECDOTES OF VOLTAIRE*.

Collected from the Converſation of ſeveral Inhabitants of Geneva, from different learned Men, and from Letters relating to this great Man.

THOSE who were not perſonally acquainted with M. de Voltaire, frequently enquire whether he was ſo ordinary in his perſon as his enemies repreſent. They have only to examine his portraits, they are very exact, eſpecially that before the edition of his works, printed at Geneva in 1757. This was painted by Liotard, who was excellent at a likeneſs, and engraved by Balechore. The countenance of M. de Voltaire was lively, and expreſſive of a kind of archneſs. He had a ſarcaſtic ſmile, his eyes ſparkled with the fire of Prometheus, and, when he was animated by ſenſibility, his figure was not diſpleaſing; eſpe-

* We are indebted for this collection of anecdotes to a literate perſon, who has amaſſed a great number of memoirs and letters on the moſt celebrated men of the age. We give them as we found them, and hope the public will receive them favourably, without making us reſponſible for ſuch contradictions as may be found between theſe anecdotes and the preceding memoirs. The ſame man may be ſeen, by different people, in different lights.

cially

cially in the latter years of his life, when age had conſiderably ſoftened his features.

M. Paliſſot has ſaid, that Voltaire poſſeſſed much benevolence and generoſity. He has certainly ſhewed theſe excellent qualities on ſeveral occaſions, but, if ſuch was his primitive character, it was much impaired, by that ſpirit of parſimonious exactneſs, to which he was very early addicted, by his fondneſs for ill-natured pleaſantry and epicurean frivolity, and by the reſentment he manifeſted at the ſatires levelled againſt him, and in fact, at the moſt juſt and candid criticiſm.

It muſt, indeed, be confeſſed, that his character was like his talents, unequal, and that the expreſſion, little great man, which he made uſe of in his Micromegas, to ridicule Fontenelle, was applicable to himſelf both as a man and a writer.

But if the external appearance and temper of Voltaire were not always pleaſing, he made amends for it by a livelineſs in converſation, which many perſons of wit and abilities have not poſſeſſed. Thoſe who have never been in his company may form ſome idea of his manner, from the excellent ſcenes in Nanine and L'Enfant prodigue. His converſation was an agreeable mixture of lively bon mots, intereſting reflections, happy ap-

plications, and diſcuſſions, which diſplayed real learning, without formality or pedantry. This is the ſtyle of the greater part of his letters, which his converſation greatly reſembled, nay, exceeded; for when he was in a good humor, or pleaſed with his company, he animated what he ſaid by the vivacity of his eyes, his action, and an air of gaiety and politeneſs which he then never failed to aſſume. Many who have gone into his company, ſtrongly prejudiced againſt him, came away delighted and ſurprized, notwithſtanding the diſadvantageous ideas with which they had been poſſeſſed.

Theſe great talents for converſation, appeared, however, to be conſiderably impaired when he came to Paris in 1778. Thoſe who were uſed to the polite world, ſays M. Mercier, remarked, that after ſo long an abſence from the capital, he no longer preſerved the happy medium between ſerioufneſs and pleaſantry, vivacity and ſententiouſneſs. It was, beſides, eaſy to ſee he had the itch of appearing ingenious; every phraſe was manifeſtly ſtudied, and this effort, being ſo apparent became at laſt highly diſagreeable.

But Paris, where Voltaire was obliged to receive ſo many viſits, and reply to ſo many compliments

pliments, was not the place where a proper judgment could be formed of his converſation. This could only be done at Fernei, in the midſt of his intimate friends, or in ſome ſelect ſociety, while he received the incenſe of delicate flattery. Then it was that his natural gaiety ſhone forth in all its luſtre, and though he might at firſt appear timid and conſtrained, he ſoon reſumed his uſual boldneſs and warmth.

Even at Paris, thoſe who did not think him always natural (though it was rarely he was otherwiſe) were charmed with the ſallies of wit which eſcaped him. The Dutcheſs of Luxembourg having ſaid, in the preſence of ſeveral perſons of diſtinction, I ſincerely wiſh our differences with England may be accommodated. Madam, replied M. de Voltaire, ſhewing her the ſword of Marechal Broglio, who was preſent, This ſhall accommodate every difference.

Voltaire was not only prompt at reply, when the jeſt was againſt him, but perhaps ſtill more ſo when complimented.

A man of wit, on his arrival at Fernei, having addreſſed him with theſe words,

Hic eſt Mecenas Virgiliuſque ſimul.

In you we find both Mecenas and Virgil.

Vol-

Voltaire immediately replied, This ought to be true of one who is honored with ſuch a viſitor.

St. Hyacinth, with whom he had at firſt been very intimate, happening to be preſent at one of the repreſentations of Oedipus, when the theatre was extremely crowded, ſaid to M. de Voltaire, pointing to the multitude, Yonder is the beſt eulogium on your tragedy. Your approbation, replied Voltaire, is much more flattering to me than that of this aſſembly.

Voltaire, in all his letters, complained he was ill. He ſometimes, perhaps, really was ſo; but in general, he enjoyed a very good ſtate of health which in part he owed to his manner of living. His ſtudies and watchings having brought on the ſcurvy, he for a long time confined himſelf to live on vegetables, and took a great deal of milk coffee; but as this beverage, which may be very beneficial when taken with ſome precautions, is apt to clog the ſtomach, he frequently purges with caſſia. I am obliged, ſays he in one of his letters, to take phyſic four times a week, and therefore, as you may well imagine, am more fit for the ſhop of an apothecary than the court of a great Prince.

When it was very cold, he paſſed the greater part of the day in bed, but roſe when the weather was fine, and walked in his garden, or took an airing in his coach in the park.

By the ſide of his bed, which was very neat, and always ſtrewed with books, was placed an elegant table, on which was water, milk-coffee, an ink-ſtand, and ſome ſlips of blank paper, to mark the pages he wiſhed to read again, or on which he intended to make obſervations. He wrote in the margin of almoſt all the books he read, and his remarks, inſpired by anger or diſguſt, ſhewed his opinion of the work: ſometimes alſo he marked its beauties. He rarely read any work through, except he found it very excellent and intereſting.

He frequently made abridgments of the writings of celebrated authors, preſeving only what was good, and frequently reduced ſeveral volumes to one only.

He was very converſant in the old French authors, whom he much admired, and whoſe ſprightly ſallies he frequently condeſcended to make his own.

What Voltaire has ſaid of the early diſplay of his talents, and his inclination for the arts, ought not

not to paſs unnoticed here, ſince it is undoubtedly true.

The Muſes all preſided at my birth,
For ere I yet could ſpeak I ſtammer'd verſe;
To lov'd Parnaſſus, by Apollo led,
My ſubject heart eager obey'd his laws:
An ardent wiſh to rhime, hath oft made rhimers;
I rhim'd ſpontaneous, in my own deſpight.
The love of ſcience ſeiz'd, enflam'd my ſoul,
I every art admir'd, nay, ador'd.

Few poets poſſeſſed ſuch facility of compoſition. He wrote verſes more rapidly than the generality of authors can write proſe. The greater part of his dramatic pieces did not coſt him more than a month, and ſome of them have been finiſhed in a fortnight. Even in his advanced years, when his imagination might have been expected to be enfeebled, and his judgment impaired, this aſtoniſhing exuberance never forſook him. The fire of his genius was not extinguiſhed by age. Thoſe who then viſited him frequently found his converſation, at firſt, lanquid and inanimate; but, if they were once able to intereſt him in the ſubject, his eyes brightened by degrees, and ſhone at length with ſuch luſtre, that no one, who had not known him to be an old man, but muſt have ſuppoſed him a youth of moſt extraordinary vivacity.

It

It has been ſaid, he enforced this ſprightlineſs by the conſtant uſe of ſtimulatives, and, principally, by large quantities of coffee. But after he had put himſelf under the direction of M. Tronchin, he was certainly more moderate in the uſe of this beverage, which has been ſo much extolled by ſome, and decried by others; beſide that, he diminiſhed its ſtrength by mixing with it a great deal of milk.

Notwithſtanding this warmth of imagination, he maintained great exactneſs in his domeſtic affairs. He was probably the only poet who ever kept a regular ledger. While he was compoſing Alzire, L'Enfant prodigue, and his Newtonian philoſophy, he ſuperintended the building of the chateau of Cirei. "I am become," ſays he, in one of his letters about that time, "overſeer of the workmen, I write "their names every day in a large account-book." This was a very troubleſome undertaking, but his pliant genius rendered every thing eaſy, and the pleaſure of obliging the Marchioneſs du Chatelet ſufficiently recompenſed all his exertions.

Voltaire ſometimes employed himſelf in ſpeculations of finance, and was intimately connected with ſeveral financiers. A good account-

ant

ant was ſuperior in his eſtimation to a man of letters, except the latter greatly excelled in ſome paticular ſpecies of compoſition. He even declared, that though they were commonly ſuppoſed merely ſelf-intereſted, many among them had given proofs of the nobleſt generoſity; as indeed, the following facts prove.

The Farmers General, during the war of 1741, were at the riſk and trouble of borrowing, at five *per cent.* and lending to government at the ſame rate, without making any profit.

When M. Orri, in 1743, to favour commerce, ſuppreſſed the impoſts on the exportation of linens, woollen manufactures, and tapiſtry, the Farmers General would not conſent to receive any indemnity.

One of them furniſhed a whole province with corn, in a time of ſcarcity, without making any profit; and refuſed any other reward than a medal, which was ſtruck in honor of him by that province.

Another financier, Samuel Bernard, who had frequently, alone, aſſiſted his country, left ten millions of livres (above four hundred thouſand pounds) lent to individuals, half of which bore no intereſt.

When the ſubſcription for the edition of Corneille, intended for the benefit of his niece, was opened,

opened, the company of Farmers General ſuſcribed for ſixty copies.

All theſe particulars are to be found in the works and letters of M. de Voltaire. He had therefore ſome reaſon to ſay, in his Babouc, when ſpeaking of financiers, they are inflated clouds, which return in rain the dew they have ſucked from the boſom of the earth.

It is well known the Abbé du Jarri obtained the prize in 1714. His poem was below mediocrity, and the critics were, with reaſon, aſtoniſhed it ſhould be preferred to the Ode of Voltaire, which, though not excellent, was manifeſtly its ſuperior. The victor had flattered La Motte, and his flatteries procured him the medal. A man of wit ſaid on this occaſion, perſons in power recompenſe their panegyriſts with penſions, and academicians with prizes.

The Abbé du Jarri, the Abbé Nadal, and the Abbé de Pons, were among the firſt who criticiſed Voltaire. The Abbé de Pons called his Mariamne, a corpſe covered with pearls; but beſtowed the higheſt commendations on the works of La Motte, which occaſioned this Epigram by Gacon.

Little

Little De Pons admires the *great* La Motte;
Great man! great wit! great genius! great—what not?
Little De Pons was prone to magnify:
Each man's a giant in a dwarfiſh eye.

The Abbé Nadal, who had himſelf written a tragedy, entitled Mariamne, joined with the Abbé de Pons, in his opinion of Voltaire's Mariamne. He criticized it ſeverely in his preface, and mentioned Thiriot, a friend to the young poet, who privately vended the prohibited works of Voltaire. The latter never replied to theſe invectives, but when M. Titon du Tillet had caſt a piece of bronze, which he called the French Parnaſſus, and in which he had introduced ſeveral indifferent verſifiers in company with the greateſt poets of the French nation, Voltaire propoſed as follows, to join with them the Abbé Nadal.

With your Helicon, pray, Monſieur Titon, make haſte;
Let Danchet, St. Didier, and Nadal be plac'd
All-a-row, on your mount; let a like load of bays,
A like crop of laurel, like quantum of praiſe
By Nadal, St. Didier, and Danchet up borne,
St. Didier and Danchet and Nadal adorn.

The Abbé Nadal never forgave this epigram, and Voltaire was from that time decried by him as the laſt of poets.

Thiriot,

Thiriot, whom Nadal had attacked, becauſe he was Voltaire's friend, was known to the enemies of that poet by the name of Friar Nicaiſe. By this they intended to ridicule the blind admiration he always expreſſed for the author of the Henriade. He was a very worthy man, but perhaps did not poſſeſs thoſe abilities which might be expected in the friend of Voltaire. His company was ſought after by the literati of Paris, becauſe he was acquainted with a great number of anecdotes of that celebrated man, and in poſſeſſion of ſeveral pieces of poetry, which had been communicated to none but himſelf.

The reſentment of Voltaire, at the injuſtice done him by La Motte, did not ſoon ſubſide. He firſt revenged himſelf by *Le Bourbier*, a ſatire, in the manner of Marot. He wrote ſeveral epigrams, and when he met with M. de la Motte, was not ſparing in ſarcaſtic bon mots.

That academician having one day ſaid, he intended to write a tragedy of Oedipus in proſe: Do ſo, replied Voltaire, and I will turn your Ines* into verſe.

M. Bel had before ſarcaſtically ſaid, in a criticiſm on the writings of La Motte, that he had given a proſaic verſification of his dramatic pieces, in order to accuſtom the public to proſe-tragedies.

* A tragedy in verſe by La Motte.

Vol-

Voltaire, in his youth, experienced the misfortunes conſequent on imprudence. He was confined in the Baſtile, and baniſhed to Sulli ſur Loire. While he was in his exile, he wrote an epiſtle to the Regent, at preſent not very common, which concluded with a kind of petition for his recall.

Fame and ſupport from thee I hop'd to find,
And ſhall thy mercy, to my miſeries blind,
Extend to all, except alone to me,
Who wander, exil'd, ſighing to be free?
Muſt I, who ſing thy praiſe, thy rigor feel?
No——from thee to thyſelf I dare appeal:
Since innocence from thee can't ſuffer blame,
I not thy pity, but thy juſtice claim.
Deign here to read what love and truth indite,
Not what my enemies, but what I write;
And ſay if, through this work, thou doſt not find,
Marks of a noble, an unſpotted mind:
Or, if the heart that feels and knows thy worth,
Could give to ſuch deteſted libels birth
As they to me impute. Think, Prince, if chance
Should make thee o'er ſome portrait caſt a glance,
Might not thy judgment, haſty given, tho' ſtrong,
Miſled by worms or varniſh, once be wrong,
And, on the time-worn canvas, falſely trace
Raphael's touches in a Vignon* face?
Poets, oh Prince, thus copy and deceive,
A rival nation prone to lie and thieve.

* A bad painter.

But didſt thou know their ſlanders, and my heart,
I then ſhou'd dread not Envy's keeneſt dart;
Unveil'd they'd ſtand, and I no more ſhou'd pine,
Oppreſs'd in youth, and ſee my day decline;
Virtuous thyſelf, thou virtue would'ſt reſpect,
Ceaſing to perſecute, thou would'ſt protect;
Perhaps would'ſt patronize a poor recluſe,
Nor rank his writings with their groſs abuſe.

M. de la Faye and M. Fourmont were two men of letters, who were highly agreeable to Voltaire, becauſe they added, to their wit and learning, all the embelliſhments of the moſt unaffected politeneſs. When M. de la Faye died, M. Fourmont addreſſed ſome verſes on that event to M. de Voltaire, their common friend. The poet replied in the following quatrain:

Your verſes, like yourſelf, we muſt admire,
They breathe a rational poetic fire;
Painting your friend, in ev'ry touch, we find
Some feature of your own ingenuous mind.

About the year 1735, Voltaire turned his ſtudies almoſt entirely to phyſics and philoſophical enquiries; leſs to gratify his own inclination, than to oblige the Marchioneſs du Chatelet. This coſt him great attention and labor. He has declared, that he always left his ſtudy conſiderably indiſpoſed, and, when he had written any thing of this kind,

he

he was forced to have recourſe to the aſſiſtance of other learned men to reviſe his writings.

The work publiſhed under the title of Elements of the Newtonian Philoſophy, was eſteemed ſuperficial, but nobody could charge it with obſcurity; and it certainly required great ſtrength of genius to paſs from the flowers of the Belles Lettres to the thorns of the Sciences, and yet compleatly to conceal thoſe thorns from the reader. Indeed many readers, accuſtomed to his enchanting ſtyle, imagined they ſhould be able to underſtand his book as eaſily as a work of mere entertainment. The author has warned them againſt ſuch a miſtake. " I believe," ſays he in a letter to M. Berger, " that any one who has been " a little accuſtomed to exerciſe his mind, will " eaſily underſtand my book; but if any ſuppoſe " it is a work which may be read between the " opera and ſupper time, like a tale of La Fon" taine, they will find themſelves greatly miſtak" en. It is a book which requires ſtudy and atten" tion."

When Voltaire publiſhed, at Paris, his Elements of the Newtonian Philoſophy, adapted to every capacity, which had firſt appeared in Holland, he reſerved to himſelf an hundred and fifty copies, which

which he diſtributed to the principal magiſtrates and learned men in Paris, who were able to form a judgment of his book. The Abbé des Fontaines, when he reviewed it, accompanied a few praiſes with a very malicious witticiſm. He pretended, at the end of his critique, that, among the errors of the preſs, there was one very neceſſary to be corrected. In the title, *Elements of the Newtonian Philoſophy, adapted to every capacity*, inſtead of *adapted*, ſaid the Abbé, we ought to read *adulterated* *.

The Marchioneſs du Chatelet well deſerved all the eulogiums beſtowed on her by Voltaire. Thoſe who knew her aſſert, ſhe had much wit and a univerſal genius; that ſhe poſſeſſed both ſenſibility and generoſity; that, though not remarkably handſome, ſhe was genteelly ſhaped, had fine eyes, and many of the charms of her own ſex, added to all the ſolidity of the other. Voltaire intended to deſcribe her under the name of Theone in his Babouc. There are, ſays he, many old women who decry her, but ſhe does much more good than all of them. No advantage whatever could tempt her to be guilty of the ſlighteſt injuſtice. Solely

* *Elémens de la Philoſophie de Newton, mis à la portée de tout le monde:* il falloit lire—*mis à la porte de tout le monde.*

intent on the advancement of his glory, ſhe gives her lover the moſt diſintereſted advice. He would bluſh, if, in her preſence, he had neglected any opportunity to do good.

Who is this divinity you celebrate? ſaid M. de Cideville to M. de Voltaire. The latter replied———

Not who Emilia is, but what
A few ſhort touches ſhall denote.
A beauty ſhe; and yet a friend!
Tho' Sports and Wiles on her attend,
Yet, knowing well his knaviſh lures,
She turns Dan Cupid out of doors.
Flow'ry her fancy; yet, tho' juſt,
Dazzle it may; delight it muſt.
Solid her reaſon, yet ſublime;
Exub'rant, oft, too high 'twould climb.
So vaſt her genius, too, that it
Horace or Newton, might befit.
Yet ſhe to trifling can deſcend;
To tattler's tattle; or contend,
With diamonds, clubs, ſpades, hearts provided,
Till Folly's battles are decided.

Madame du Chatelet, amid the moſt attentive application to ſtudy, actually entered, and with enthuſiaſm, into all the pleaſures of ſociety. She ſang, ſhe danced, and was an excellent actreſs.

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Her ſoul is wove from web ſo fine,
Pliant each form it takes,
Mounts in the morn to heights divine,
And in the evening rakes.

Thus wrote M. de Voltaire to the Comte de Sade, " Faſhions, dreſs, and baubles, adds he, " are ſuitable to her age; but her merit is ſuperior " to her age, to her own ſex, or to ours."

Madame du Chatelet alſo wrote verſes: at leaſt I have by me ſeveral little pieces which bear her name. I ſhall only quote an epiſtle to the King of Pruſſia, which I believe has never been printed.

Half woman, half philoſopher,
Thro' this poor world a paſſenger,
Where ſimple peace and ſmiles reſort,
Far from the baubles of a court,
Intrigues and politics, and lies;
Far from the follies I deſpiſe;
From love's inconſtancies and tricks;
From fops and fools, and fanatics;
Far from that mercenary hoſt,
Who dupe deſpiſed ignorance moſt,
In ſolitude, contemplative,
And happy liberty I live.

Not that, by metaphor and trope,
I'd ſhew myſelf a miſanthrope;
I hate not all: 'twere mis'ry then,
Singly to ſnarl and guard my den!

No—I've a friend, Voltaire, whom you,
Perhaps, hold worthy friendſhip too;
With him, I wiſdom's leſſons con,
While time and tide glide gently on.
Of men or gods I nothing wanted,
Where one ſmall doſe of prudence granted.
From theſe ſaid gods we've one ſelected,
To whom our temples are erected;
The decorated walls, around,
With precepts from himſelf abound.
Here I, retired, in thought ſerene,
Thoſe wiſh'd-for fruits of prudence glean.
Aſk you to know the ſacred name?
'Tis Frederic! Seated faſt by Fame,
Lo! yonder, from Olympus, he
Charms and inſtructs the world and me.
Ah! wherefore may not I aſcend,
With leſſer gods, adoring bend?
Alas! from us inferior wits,
Obſcur'd by glory, Frederic ſits.
For me, of nature all ſerene,
Nymph of the woods, and meadows green,
I, near the ſedgy banks of Blaiſe,
Unenvied paſs, on earth, my days.
And canſt thou not, a moment cleave
The clouds, and all thy thunders leave?
Ah! ſure, to be oblig'd to reign,
Muſt give the ſocial ſpirit pain.

It is not true, that Voltaire quarrelled with t
family of the Marchioneſs du Chatelet, after t
dea

death of that illuſtrious Lady. There is a letter from him, dated Fernei, to Madame de Chambonin, in which he ſays, " Do you not ſometimes " ſee the Marquis du Chatelet? His ſon has writ- " ten to me from Vienna. He has rendered him- " ſelf of conſiderable importance at a very early " age. This cannot but give a moſt ſenſible " pleaſure to his father; if you ſee him, do not " forget to make my reſpects."

There are many verſes addreſſed to Madame du Chatelet that have never been publiſhed. We have ſeen ſome which are worthy being preſerved. The following were written on her library.

Some reſt, ſome ſtudy, ſome few jokes,
Few ſilly books, few ſilly folks,
A friend, much ſolitude, no ſtate,
Say, is not mine a happy fate!

But what does much more honor to the Marchioneſs du Chatelet than the verſes of Voltaire, is, that that poet performed the greater part of his acts of beneficence during his ſtay at Cirei. Several men of letters experienced his generoſity, and among others, M. d'Arnaud, whom he, from time to time, furniſhed with ſmall ſums, to procure him admiſſion into the theatre. This excellent man, being afterwards deſirous of returning

the

the money to M. de Voltaire, the latter told him, "It was a mere trifle, and that a child never re- "turned ſugar plumbs to his father."

Several other perſons partook of the liberality of M. de Voltaire, who, living under the eye o ſo generous a lady, followed her advice and ex- ample. Not but he had before been a benefacto to many men of learning, but he was more par ticularly ſo at that period; nothing encouragin us ſo much to virtuous actions, as to know the are witneſſed by a perſon whoſe eſteem we deſir to obtain.

Notwithſtanding the various poetical deſcri tions which have repreſented Fernei as a pala built by Fairies, it was no more than a neat, agre able country houſe; convenient, but not ſpacio ſince it had but ſeven windows in front. Eve thing there had more the appearance of the co modious retreat of a perſon of moderate fortu than the ſumptuous dwelling of an opulent u married man. This has been ſaid of it by Marquis de Luchet. Some neat furniture, vants modeſtly habited, a table well ſupplied, unexpenſive, gardens adorned by Nature alo

and a park, kept in no great order, compoſe the whole deſcription of Fernei.

The church, which Voltaire pulled down and rebuilt in another place, to enlarge the proſpect from his houſe, is a ſmall and ſimple edifice.

The theatres, which have been ſo frequently mentioned, preſented no very brilliant decorations. The ſide ſcenes were ornamented with leaf braſs and paper flowers. The perſpective conſiſted of Arcades cut to form a kind of piazza. The curtain, inſtead of baize, was a cloth, on which was painted, in cinnamon colour, an immenſe ſun. On ſuch a theatre were *Zaire*, *Alzire*, and *Merope* acted.

Though Voltaire was a poet, and a great poet, he does not ſeem to have looked on poetry in ſo important a light as many of his brother bards. "I know not, ſays the Abbé Trublet, what he "really thinks of proſe and verſe, for I do not "abſolutely rely on what he ſays in his writings."

It is very certain, that, as ſoon as he began to ſtudy the Newtonian philoſophy, he conſidered himſelf much ſuperior to Rouſſeau, whom he very unjuſtly calls a paltry verſifier. "Rouſſeau, "ſaid he, deſpiſes me becauſe I ſometimes neg-"lect rhime, and I deſpiſe him becauſe he knows "nothing but to rhime."

Pope

Pope having become a philoſopher, or being deſirous to be thought one, has expreſſed himſelf on the ſubject of poetry in much the ſame manner as Voltaire. " Whenever I think ſeriouſly, I " cannot but think theſe things very idle; as idle " as if a beaſt of burden ſhould go on gingling " his bells, without bearing any thing valuable " about him, or ever ſerving his maſter." (Letter to Ed. Blount, 1723.)

Voltaire, indeed, could not pardon verſes which did not riſe above mediocrity; he preferred proſe to ſuch compoſitions; but no perſon was more delighted with poetry truly excellent. He was laviſh in eulogiums on Racine, and there is no doubt but his praiſes of that elegant and harmonious poet, the Virgil of France, were really ſincere.

When he was aſked to write a commentary on Racine, as he had done on Corneille, ' What would ' you have me remark? ſaid he: I could only ' write at the bottom of every page, exquiſite! ' beautiful! pathetic!'

Voltaire looked on Racine as the model for poetical, and Maſſillon for proſe writers. On the table, near his bed, *Athalie* always lay by the ſide of the *Petit-Carême.*

A young ſcholar having one day ſpoken ſlightingly of Boileau and Racine, in the preſence of Voltaire,

Voltaire, " Softly, young man, ſaid he, John " and Nicholas are our maſters; let us reſpect " them, and endeavor to imitate their beauties."

The young man endeavoring to ſupport what he had ſaid by quoting the opinion of an Academician, ſuſpected of not much admiring thoſe two great poets, " Pſhaw, replied Voltaire, his verſes " are the higheſt panegyric on theirs!"

The correctneſs of Boileau, and the pathetic elegance of Racine, had rendered him no great admirer of any of the Engliſh poets.

Being aſked one day what he thought of the genius of Milton, " The ancients, replied he, re- " commended us to ſacrifice to the Graces, but " Milton ſacrificed to the Devil." Milton, however, ſtudied the graceful as intimately as the ſublime of poetry; as numberleſs paſſages prove.

There was a law ſuit between the Marchioneſs de B**, Lady to the Princeſſes, and the Comte de L**, who reciprocally accuſed each other of a gaming defraud, relative to two contracts. This trifling diſpute had produced complaints, appeals, and requiſitions at Plombiers, where it happened. M. de Voltaire, being there at that time, was choſen arbitrator, and wrote the following verſes on the memoir of Madame de B** as his award:

Vain

Vain your complaints, you've nothing loſt;
'Tis you the thief are, to our coſt;
You ſteal our freedom, while your heart
You guard too well from Love's keen dart;
But Venus, Queen of Sports and Smiles,
Proclaims you caught by your own wiles.

A young poet, who thought himſelf an original writer, having conſulted him on a tragedy, full of extraordinary incidents, Voltaire pointed out to him the defects of his piece. The Rhimer replied, he had purpoſely forſaken the beaten track of Corneille and Racine. "So much the "worſe, returned Voltaire; originality is nothing "but judicious imitation."

A moment's impatience and diſpleaſure, at ſeeing Madame D** uſing coſmetics, produced the following lines:

If chance, or money, ſhould inſure,
To your carbuncled face a cure;
Tho' much leſs ugly than before,
Of uglineſs you'd ſtill have ſtore.

Modern hiſtory, ſaid Voltaire, on a particular occaſion, is rendered inſipid by dwelling on trivial incidents, fit only for gazettes. The gravity of the ancient hiſtorians diſdained thoſe minutiæ, and only deſcribed great and important events. Their

Their pictures, therefore, have more boldneſs and expreſſion.

Voltaire ſeemed to believe he had more admirers in England than in France. This might be the caſe in 1730, but latterly he had as many partizans at Paris as at London, or even more; becauſe, having aſſumed in all his writings the ſprightly air of the Pariſians, he pleaſed almoſt every body.

Life, ſaid Voltaire, is thick ſown with thorns, and I know no other remedy than to paſs quickly through them. The longer we dwell on our misfortunes, the greater is their power to harm us.

Methuſelah himſelf, did he exiſt, could never read, ſaid he, on another occaſion, all the nonſenſe which is daily printed. I know not, added he, but the ſcarcity of books among the ancients, might be preferable to that multitude of publications which ſwarm from the preſſes of London and Paris.

Being preſent, early in his life, together with Maupertuis, in the dreſſing-room of the King of Pruſſia;

Pruſſia; he addreſſed to the Philoſopher of St. Maloes, then his friend, this impromptu.

See from that head, rever'd, the ringlets flow,
Pure as his manners is that ample fleece;
His locks, types of his genius, white as ſnow,
Have Time outſtript, and ſtill with Time increaſe.

Ingenuity, in adapting the converſation to the perſons with whom they converſed with, was common to Fontenelle, La Motte, and alſo to Voltaire. The firſt time the Duke of N—, an Engliſh nobleman, came to ſee the latter, he turned the converſation on what might moſt intereſt his Grace. He diſcourſed on the heroic deeds of his anceſtors, and, thence digreſſing to the illuſtrious perſons produced by his country, gave his opinion on the merits of Robertſon and Hume.

Voltaire was not fond of academic eulogiums, which he conſidered as only proper to give a falſe coloring to facts, and to produce declaimers. Inſtead of that exaggerated panegyric, often beſtowed on perſons of very inconſiderable merit, he recommended hiſtorical diſcuſſions, in the manner of Plutarch, in which more regard might be paid to truth. The Marquis de Villette relates this of him; and adds, that, one day reading to him

him one of theſe declamatory eulogiums, he grew dull and tired before he had heard a third part of it.

Voltaire compared the Engliſh to a butt of their own ſtrong beer, the froth at top, dregs at bottom, but the middle excellent.

" Your nation, like your language, ſaid Vol-
" taire, one day to an Engliſhman, is a ſtrange
" mixture of a variety of others. When I behold
" one of your countrymen fond of the tricks and
" chicane of law, I ſay, there is a Norman, who
" came over with William the Conqueror. When
" I ſee another, affable and polite, he has the
" manners of a Platagenet; or a third, outrageous
" and brutal, that, ſays I, is a Dane."

Notwithſtanding his enthuſiaſm in behalf of the Engliſh, he confeſſed, there were among them many unſociable and melancholic characters. He one day ſaid to Lord Lyttleton.

Capricious, proud, the ſelf-ſame axe avails,
To chop off Monarch's heads, or horſes tails.

In ſome farewell verſes to the Marquis de Villette, Voltaire, after having been received with much

much reſpect at Paris, thus renounced his prejudices againſt his country:

Tho' abſent long, I Frenchmen find the ſame,
Mild, learned, ſocial, active, fond of fame;
Born to be lov'd, when educated well,
The world they vie with, England far excel.

Diſcourſing of the Hiſtory of England, "The hangman, ſaid he, ſhould be their hiſtorian, for he has uſually ſettled their diſputes."

Yet he was fond of ſpeaking Engliſh, and converſed in that language with Dr. Franklin, the Lycurgus of America. Madame Denis, being preſent, ſaid, "She ſhould be very glad if they would ſpeak French, that ſhe might underſtand and improve by their diſcourſe." "Niece, replied Voltaire, I own I am proud of being able to ſpeak the language of a Franklin."

Voltaire, after his diſputes with La Beaumelle, was told by ſomebody, that writer had ſaid he would purſue him to hell. "Whenever he pleaſes, replied Voltaire, he will find no impediment, and he richly merits ſuch a reſting place."

Speaking

Speaking of the overbearing diſpoſition diſcovered by Maupertuis, in his quarrel with Koenig, he ſaid, "He reſembled the weazel in the fable, who did not care if he put both heaven and earth in confuſion, for the ſake of a rabbit's hole which he had uſurped."

When he was told that the King of Pruſſia was greatly prejudiced againſt him by his enemy, "Well, ſaid he, I appeal from the Great Man ill-informed, to the Great Man better-informed."

An author, whoſe former works had been twenty years forgotten, having broken his literary ſilence by an attack on Voltaire; the latter wrote to one of his friends, "This man has left the abode of the dead to ſpeak evil of the living."

An officer of the regiment of Conti, then in garriſon at Fernei, having caught and ſupported him as he ſtumbled, he thanked him by quoting the following lines from *Zaire:*

"A Frenchman's arm and honor I revere,
To me they ever uſeful were and dear."

He

He repeated the ſame compliment to the Chevalier de l'Eſcure, who preſented him, on his laſt journey to Paris, with an impromtu in his praiſe.

The Comte de **, coming to Fernei to ſee Voltaire, the poet ſaid to him, "You reſemble Orpheus, who deſcended to the habitation of ſhadows, I am now no more than a ſhadow." "You are a moſt paradoxical ſhadow then, replied the Comte, for you emit great light."

When Voltaire was told, that Mr. Needham had produced eels by an infuſion of grains of corn in water, he replied, "I believe nothing of it. *Il ya la anguille ſous roche**; time will diſcover the truth." In fact, on a repetition of the experiment, it was diſcovered that theſe ſuppoſed eels were only farinaceous particles in a ſtate of fermentation.

The Marquis de Villette, whoſe converſation was particularly agreeable to Voltaire, remained with him, at Fernei, five months. A young lady of rank, but ſmall fortune, tho' poſſeſſed of every

* *An eel under a rock.* A French proverb, ſignifying, there is ſome error: the wit was in the application.

grace

grace and accompliſhment, was then at Fernei. Voltaire ſoon perceived, with great ſatisfaction, that the Marquis was very attentive to that lady, and propoſed his marrying her, with a portion of a hundred and fifty thouſand livres (above ſix thouſand pounds). I am ſure, ſaid he, Madame " Denis will have no objection; for ſhe looks on " *Belle & Bonne* †, (which was the name he gave " to Mademoiſelle de Varicourt) as her daughter. " As to my other relations, I have money enough " to leave them at my death, and you muſt be " ſenſible they have no vaſt while to wait."

The Marquis de Villette would not accept this generous offer, but married Mademoiſelle de Varicourt with ſcarcely any fortune. When Voltaire was complimented on having been the occaſion of this marriage, he replied, I have made two perſons happy, and one wife.

The Marquis de Villette, writing from Fernei, ſaid of Mademoiſelle de Varicourt, with whom he was then deſirous to ſhare his fortune. " She " is the guardian angel of the patriarch, and is be- " come neceſſary to his exiſtence. You cannot " imagine how affecting it is to ſee the fond ca- " reſſes ſhe laviſhes on him, and the grateful man- " ner in which he kiſſes her hands. It is Anacreon " ſerved by Hebe."

† Beautiful and Good.

A picture, ſhe, of every grace,
That, moving, ornaments each place:
Whether in kitchen, or in hall,
Miſtreſs or maid, admir'd by all!
Freſh from the hand of Nature, ſhe
Has Nature's pure ſimplicity.
We look, and ſtraight are aw'd, yet warm'd;
A Veſtal, yet a Bacchante form'd!
Uniting, in ſupreme degree,
Incitive ſmiles and chaſte ſeverity.

During his laſt illneſs, Voltaire earneſtly requeſted Madame de Villette to ſend for a notary, that he might leave her further proofs of his regard. That young lady, too grateful for the favors ſhe had already received to be deſirous of more, refuſed for once to comply with the requeſt of her dying benefactor. Voltaire therefore wrote a letter to M. d'Alembert, in which he ſaid, "That, as he had but a few moments to live, he had made uſe of them to recommend to his care Madame de Villette."

The day after his arrival in the capital, Voltaire preſented her to ſeveral ladies of the court who came to ſee him. "Ladies, ſaid he, this "is *Belle & Bonne*; ſhe took pity on my old "age. It is to her I owe the happineſs of ſeeing "you, and indeed that I yet exiſt."

Voltaire's

Voltaire's care and tenderneſs for Madame de Villette was repaid by a truly filial gratitude. Three months after the death of that celebrated man, whom ſhe conſidered as her father, ſhe could not pronounce his name without ſhedding tears; nor recollect the ſports of her childhood, in which he had ſo frequently borne a part, without experiencing the tendereſt emotions.

We ſhall here add the fragment of a letter from M. de Voltaire to a relation of the Marquis de Villette.

" The happy pair, Madam, have given me per-
" miſſion to congratulate you on their felicity.
" Mademoiſelle de Varicourt formerly conſented
" to be my daughter; Madame de Villette has now
" arrived at a much greater honor, that of being
" your niece. This diſtinction, I can aſſure you,
" ſhe well deſerves. I only reſtore you your own:
" Virtue, an enlarged underſtanding, and the
" Graces. My age and infirmities will not permit
" me to pay you my reſpects in perſon, but no-
" thing can diminiſh the ſincere regard with which
" I have honor to be, &c.

The following verſes were addreſſed to the Marquis de Villette, on his marriage, by M. de la Harpe:

For you, Felicity her garland wreaths,
To you, his richeſt gem Voltaire bequeaths:

His was the happy taſk which bliſs allures,
His laſt beſt work to render perfect yours.

When Voltaire was laſt at Paris, at the firſt viſit he made to M. le Comte d'Argental, he ſaid to him, "I have put off dying to come and ſee you."

The Comte d'Argental was the intimate friend of Voltaire, and it was him of whom he ſaid, "He is born to increaſe the harmony of ſouls, as Rameau was to enrich the harmony of ſounds." He made him the confident of whatever he wrote. When the *Enfant Prodigue* was firſt acted, the name of the author was concealed, and only known to M. d'Argental and Mademoiſelle Quinault. Voltaire wrote thus to that actreſs; "You are able "to keep the ſecrets of another as well as your "own. Were it known I am the author, the "piece would have been hiſſed: the world can- "not endure the ſame perſon ſhould ſucceed in "two different kinds of compoſition. I have "made myſelf enemies enough by Oedipus and "the Henriade."

In 1776, a print was publiſhed, entitled, The Breakfaſt of Fernei. M. de la B**, deſigner of this engraving, is there repreſented at the tea-

table

table, very plump and bulky, as he was; while Voltaire is in bed as thin as a ſkeleton. At ſight of this caricature, he exclaimed, "This is poor Lazarus at the table of the wicked Dives." And ſeeing another print, he aſked, "Was it worth all this trouble to repreſent me ſo ugly."

It is well known he was like Horace, *iraſci celer*, and even much more ſo than Horace; for his paſſion ſometimes became a kind of rage. To excite this, the name of Freron was ſufficient. A friend who had called to ſee him at Fernei, ſaid to him, one day, in the courſe of converſation, on the author of the *Année Literaire*; "You would not then receive him, if he ſhould come to pay you a viſit? "Receive him! exclaimed Voltaire, I would ſhew him the ſhorteſt way out of the houſe." "But if he actually ſhould come, replied his friend, would not this be doing homage to your genius?" "It would ſo—It would ſo, returned Voltaire. Yes, if he ſhould come, I would certainly accommodate him with the beſt bed in my houſe." Thus by humoring his vanity, it was eaſy to ſooth the violence of his temper. His intimates were well acquainted with this ſecret, and, by repeating a few of his own verſes, their common-place flattery could produce the ſame effect, on him, that the harp of David did upon Saul.

Voltaire

Voltaire did not approve thoſe heteroclite dramas which are neither tragedy nor comedy; and only ſerve to ſhew the incapacity of the author to write either the one or the other. A man of letters from Paris, being on a viſit at Ferney, Voltaire aſked, "What news from the French theatre; do they ſtill continue to play at bowls with death's heads?" This was the expreſſion of an author of the laſt age concerning the Engliſh.

Voltaire, one day, read the manuſcript of his tragedy of Merope to the Abbé de Voiſenon, who eſteemed it admirable. "Yet, ſaid Voltaire, the actors have rejected it." They did not refuſe it long; it was acted, and met with the greateſt ſucceſs, both through its own merit, and the admirable performance of Mademoiſelle Dumeſnil. "What would you ſay (writes Voltaire in one of "his letters) to an actreſs who drew tears from "the audience during three ſucceſſive acts? The "auditors gave me all the credit for the exqui- "ſite pleaſure they received: part of it was due "to the performers. The enthuſiaſm of the pit "was ſo extravagant that they demanded to ſee "me, in the moſt clamorous manner; I was car- "ried forcibly into the box belonging to the

"Lady

" Lady of Marechal Villers, who was there with " her daughter-in-law. The audience were frantic, " they called out for the Ducheſs de Villars to " kiſs me, and made ſo much noiſe, ſhe was " obliged to comply, by order of her mother- " in-law. I was kiſſed in public, as Alain Char- " tier was by the Princeſs Margaret of Scotland; " but he was aſleep, and I was wide awake." *(Letter to M. d'Aigueberre.)*

This enthuſiaſm of the public tranſported Voltaire; he was as pleaſed as a child with ſo much celebrity: nor did he conceal the ſatisfaction he felt. It even hindered him from ſleeping. Letters from a Prince or a Miniſter have ſometimes deprived him of reſt, and diſturbed the repoſe of his retreat, which ought to have been the retreat of a philoſopher.

After the repreſentation of *Alzire*, Madame du Chatelet, being aſked why he appeared ſo diſſatisfied in the moſt agreeable company? " Becauſe, ſaid ſhe, the execution of a notorious robber has diverted the attention of the public. M. de Voltaire, and his fine tragedy, are no longer talked of. This occaſions his uneaſineſs, he cannot forgive the tortured criminal."

A young man, who intended to ſtudy phyſic, having communicated his deſign to Voltaire,

" What

"What have you undertaken? ſaid he, ſmiling? Why to convey drugs, of which you know but little, into a body of which you know ſtill leſs."

Yet he frequently conſulted phyſicians, and ſometimes even quacks, though he had but little faith in the medical art. "Regimen, ſaid he, is better than phyſic." Every one ſhould be his own phyſician. We ought to aſſiſt, and not to force Nature; but, more eſpecially, we ſhould learn to ſuffer, grow old, and die. Some things are ſalutary, and others hurtful; eat with moderation, what you know by experience agrees with your conſtitution. Nothing is good for the body, but what we can digeſt; what medicine can procure digeſtion? Exerciſe. What will recruit ſtrength? Sleep. What will alleviate incurable evils? Patience."

To this patience he frequently added the remedies preſcribed by able phyſicians; he allowed theſe were very rare, "Their art, ſaid he, like every other, requires genius; nor is it poſſible to foretell the iſſue of many diſorders, without that aptneſs at prognoſtic, which characterizes the phyſician of genius. A character moſt rare and eſtimable, for every profeſſion produces its Virgils and its Mœviuſes."

He recommended, to thoſe who did not poſſeſs this genius, to wait the efforts of Nature, and rather to obſerve than to act.

He did not approve of the remedies of mountebanks. His pleaſantries againſt the anti-apoplectic amulet of the apothecary Arnoud, by wearing which many have died of apoplexies, and the beaume de vie, uſeful on ſome occaſions, but dangerous if too frequently uſed, are well known. He was told, one day, that Hippocrates preſcribed the blood of an aſſes foal for madneſs; that, ſaid he, is a remedy which ſeems to have been invented by ſome perſon who labored under the diſeaſe.

Voltaire frequently ridiculed thoſe wretched rhimers, who talk of the elegance in which they live while they are dying with hunger, and who rack their imagination to celebrate their voluptuous leiſure. He has not forgotten them in his *Pauvre Diable.*

No coat, no ſhoes, no ſtockings, ſhiv'ring I,
Wrapt up, ſans ſheet, in half a blanket lie;
Dead ſmall beer ſip, and ſing from parch'd-up throat,
Champagne and nectar, in moſt mournful note:
Starving, of dainties, balls, and banquets vaunt,
Tort'ring my brain, the charms of eaſe to chaunt.

He

He certainly ought to have diſſuaded, from the dangerous path of literature, numbers of thoſe young perſons, without fortune, who miſtake the phrenzy of making bad verſes for genius; but inſtead of giving ſalutary advice to the prodigious number of paltry verſifiers, who paid him homage, he encouraged, extolled, and fed them with flattery and hopes.

There was no ſcribbler, ſays M. Mercier, who did not write to Voltaire. He was ſo kind as to anſwer all their letters, becauſe they flattered his exceſſive ſelf-love. It was the traffic of vanity, in which much was ſaid, and nothing meant. Voltaire has been often known to retract, after the death of authors, the praiſes he had beſtowed on them while living; and diſavow, in converſation, the flatteries he ſo liberally diſpenſed in his writings. There are no leſs than ſeven authors, known, to whom he had either ſaid or wrote; I conſider you as my heir. You ſhall ſupply my place. You will be my ſucceſſor. And other expreſſions to the ſame purport. Among theſe, ſome may perhaps have imitated his manner with ſucceſs, but certainly France has not produced ſeven Voltaires.

Somebody having ſaid to him, How can you flatter ſo extravagantly ſuch indifferent writers? Theſe

Theſe authors, already ſo vain, will be quite out of their ſenſes with your praiſes. What would you have me do? replied he; I have no other way to get rid of them. Would you have me tell them they are magpies, when they imagine themſelves eagles! They would not believe me, and I ſhould but arm their vanity againſt myſelf.

Situated, like the great, between flattery and malignity, he endeavored to cheriſh the one, and reſtrain the other.

Voltaire was loud in his commendations of Diderot, but certainly entertained nearly the ſame opinion of him he did of Paliſſot, which was, that he had a ſtrong underſtanding, but was often ſcarcely intelligible; magnifying common place ideas, and announcing the chimeras of his imagination as important diſcoveries; prolix and incorrect in his writings, which yet, from ſome occaſional ſhining paſſages, might be compared to a chaos, in which the light breaks forth at intervals.

Voltaire has written ſeveral very flattering letters to a celebrated writer, whoſe literary productions do him great honor. He, however, thought much better of his art of poetry than his poetical

pieces.

pieces. He is, ſaid he, like Moſes, who conducted others to the promiſed land, though he never entered it himſelf. When the opera of *Roland*, written anew by the ſame author, was acted, he was aſked to go and ſee it; No, ſaid he, Quinault has forbidden me.

All the editions of Voltaire's works contain a great number of pieces which are not his. He ſometimes would ſay, my inventory is already made out, though I am not yet dead, and every one inſerts ſome of his goods to obtain a ſale for them. He ſometimes wrote to the publiſhers: Do not print ſuch a number of things aſcribed to me, there is no travelling down to poſterity with ſo much baggage. He, who of all our poets is the lighteſt and airieſt in his ſtyle, is moſt voluminous and heavy in the external appearance of his works. They have been four times publiſhed in quarto, and loaded with a great number of things which ſhould have been rejected. A hungry editor, ſays he, is glad of this traſh to fill up a volume, which he thinks not ſufficiently large. Such abuſes prevail in literature, and almoſt in every kind of trade. There are merchant ſhips, and there are pirates: the world is full of theſe frauds.

The

The Marquis de Villette relates a very extraordinary anecdote, which is, that Voltaire had a fever, every year, on St. Bartholomew's day, on which he never received any viſits, but kept his bed, while a certain unaccountable affection of his organs, and an intermitting quickneſs of pulſe, ſufficiently marked this periodical criſis. He muſt, however, have been leſs affected by this extraordinary paroxyſm than has been pretended, becauſe there are ſome verſes, of his writing, dated the twenty-fourth of Auguſt, or St. Bartholomew's-day. It is true he wiſhes this day, ſo calamitous to France, might—

With long forgotten hiſtory,
Buried in oblivion be;
Mortals, condemn'd to ſuffer, ought,
With happier times, to have their memory fraught.

The Preſident Kinglin, of Colmar, had a ſon diſordered with the palſy in his legs and thighs. Voltaire, as he kiſſed the child, who was very handſome, ſaid, "Here is the head of Cupid on the body of "Lazarus."

After the repreſentation of Alzira, the converſation, in a company where Voltaire was preſent, turned

turned on the impreſſion which the noble and chriſtian ſentiments of Guſman had made on the audience; the Marchioneſs of **, who had played the part of Alzira, remarked, that chriſtianity naturally inſpires us with an elevation of ſoul: Yes, charming Alzira, ſaid Voltaire, but you cauſe the damnation of thoſe whom Guſman converts. This anſwer is only a repetition of the end of an epigram he formerly addreſſed to Mademoiſelle Gauſſin; but it has been frequently remarked, that Voltaire often repeated, in proſe, what he had before written, in verſe.

Madame de **, who was very handſome, ſpoke highly in praiſe of the wit of Voltaire, who returned the compliment by ſaying, I know, Madam, you perfectly well underſtand what wit is; but I muſt be allowed to be a connoiſſeur in beauty, and I am at preſent in raptures.

He complimented another very handſome lady, by telling her, your rivals are maſter-pieces of art, you are a maſter-piece of nature.

Three very amiable ladies having been introduced to Voltaire, he requeſted they would ſit down;

down; the contour of the Graces, ſaid he, is charming when ſtanding, but much more ſo when ſeated.

Notwithſtanding the praiſes Voltaire laviſhed on Helvetius in the letters he wrote to him, he had no great eſteem for his works. This appeared not only by what he ſaid in converſation, but, ſtill more, by his criticiſm of his book, entitled De l'Eſprit, after the death of its author. "Nobody can believe, ſays he, that all minds are "equally proper for the ſciences, and differ only "by education. Nothing has more frequently "been proved falſe by experience. Thoſe who "are not deſtitute of ſenſibility, are much offended with what this writer had ſaid on friendſhip, "and he, himſelf, would have rejected, or at "leaſt very much ſoftened his expreſſions, if he "had not been carried away by the ſpirit of ſyſtematizing. It were to be wiſhed, likewiſe, that "this work were more methodical, and contained "fewer trifling remarks, the greater part of which "are without foundation." Voltaire charges that author with emphatically repeating common-place ideas, though he had before repreſented this very writer as ſuperior to Bolieau, and has ſaid to him, "You excel ſo much in my own profeſſion, "that I dare not exerciſe it after you."

Voltaire,

Voltaire, on his return to Paris, was greatly ſurpriſed at the abſurd and affected jargon he heard in all companies; at the conceit with which thoſe of the moſt deſpicable capacities ſeated themſelves on the throne of criticiſm; at the aſſuming familiarity of the greater part of young perſons, and at that ſpirit of contradiction, only to be equalled by their ignorance, in which they indulged. He was above all offended at their punning in his preſence: he conſidered this practice as deſtructive of converſation, the bane of good taſte, and the wit only of thoſe who have none. He ſaid to the ingenious Madame du Deffant: Let us combine to deſtroy this monſter, which thus tyrannizes over the polite world. But Voltaire did not live long enough to effect its deſtruction; this deformed tyrant ſtill reigns, at Paris, under the name of Charade.

Voltaire could ill accommodate himſelf to that extreme inſignificance which predominates ſo continually in the converſation of women. Happening once to be in company with ſome very elegant ladies, or who believed themſelves ſuch at leaſt, after having diſcuſſed all the topics of the moment, they began to talk of their dreſs, and enter minutely into the merit of each others caps

and

and ribbands. One among them remarked, that Madame de** had on a pair of ſhoes moſt exquiſitely elegant: pray, Madam, ſaid ſhe, who is your ſhoemaker? He is a divine man!—An admirable man!—An unparalleled man! Voltaire, who was preſent, at laſt began to loſe his patience, and ſaid, with ſome peeviſhneſs, "Indeed, Ladies, "you talk in a very extraordinary ſtyle. A ſhoe-"maker an unparalleled man! What terms pray "would you employ to ſpeak of the greateſt man "in the nation?"—Voltaire has extremely well deſcribed the manners of the greater part of women in his *Vie de Paris & de Verſailles*, in which, he ſays, they—

In ſeeming raptures altogether,
Tattle of ſermons, cards, and weather;
Exhauſt their lab'ring ſouls with laws,
To regulate the price of gauze.
What colours match beſt, blue or pink,
And ſing becauſe they cannot think.

All kinds of games, except cheſs, appeared to him very inſipid. He acknowledged them inventions abſolutely neceſſary for thoſe who had neither buſineſs nor other diverſion, and who had but that reſource.

Soon as the cards appear, behold,
Fop, fool, peer, prieſt, ſeer, cit, young, old,

With ardent eye devour the pack,
And ſtake their bliſs on red and black;
Fill up the horrid void of thought,
With battles all by avarice fought.

He knew the danger of play by experience, having loſt ten thouſand livres (above four hundred pounds) at Biribi.

Voltaire, on his laſt arrival at Paris, was ſtopped at the *Barrieres*, by the Officers of the Revenue, who enquired whether he had any thing in his carriage liable to pay duty. Gentlemen, replied he, there is nothing contraband here, except myſelf.

Though Voltaire affected to have a great reſpect for the profeſſion of an actor, it is probable he had not much more eſteem for it than thoſe who have repreſented it as not very honorable. Le Kain, when young, having ſolicited he would procure him admiſſion into the Royal Company of Comedians, he replied, Ah! my friend, never engage in the profeſſion. Act for your amuſement, but never make acting your buſineſs.

Yet Voltaire ſhewed every outward mark of reſpect to the comedians. When they came to compliment him, on his arrival at Paris, he ſaid to them, "I ſhall henceforth only live for you, and

by

by you." M. Linguet thought this anſwer very ſingular, and has queſtioned the truth of the anecdote; but it is certain, that, however ſtrange it may appear, it is no leſs true.

In a letter to a certain performer, are theſe words, which he has been often known to repeat in converſation. "I look on your art as one of "thoſe which do the higheſt honor to our coun-"try, and merit the greateſt reſpect."

Such a declaration does not well agree with his anſwer to Le Kain; an anſwer much to be approved, both from a regard to the manners of the nation, and the opinion of the public, which is not very favorable to the profeſſion of a comedian. One of the ſtatutes of the French Academy is, not to receive any one into their body who has exerciſed it. This was, indeed, diſpenſed with in the caſe of Dubelloi, who, having performed on a ſtage ſix hundred leagues from Paris, it was not known, at leaſt every one might pretend not to know, that he had ever been an actor.

Though Voltaire ſometimes behaved with ſo much reſpect to actors and actreſſes, he did not always treat them with the ſame ceremony. One day, when his Irene was performing at the houſe of the Marquis de Villette, a celebrated actreſs reciting her part rather negligently, Voltaire ſaid to her, "Really, Mademoiſelle, it is unneceſſary

" for me to write verſes of ſix feet, if you gulp " down three of them."

Le Kain, himſelf, when he has been playing Oroſmanes at Fernei, has heard the poet ſaying in a low voice, when he thought he did not perform with ſufficient feeling, *comique, comique.* An actor, of the name of Frere, having requeſted to play the part of Gengis Khan, in the Orphan of China, and ſometimes falling into inanimated monotony, Voltaire muttered between his teeth, " *Frere Gengis,* " *Frere Gengis* (Friar Gengis.)" He told Sarraſin, when he recited a ſcene of Brutus in too languid a manner, " You ſeem to be ſaying, O holy virgin! " grant I may get a hundred pounds prize in the " lottery." Another actor, who poſſeſſed a good voice, but no great underſtanding, pronounced theſe verſes in a flat and inſipid manner:

Inſtant the Conqueror peaceful ſhall appear;
The truce proclaim'd, he comes: behold him here!

" Yes, ſays Voltaire, the Conqueror is coming; " but you announce him as if you ſhould ſay, Stand " out of the way, don't you ſee the Cow."

Voltaire was greatly attached to M. Turgot, Firſt Miniſter of the Finances, who had, he ſaid, begun his career by becoming the father of the people.

people. He wrote to Madame de Maurepas: "If "ever M. Turgot leaves his place, I ſhall turn "Monk in deſpair." When that miniſter was diſgraced by M. de Clugni, Madame de Maurepas reminded Voltaire of what he had ſaid. "Very "true, Madam, replied he, I am become a Monk "of Clugni."

The Abbé de Lille, whom Voltaire uſed to call Publius Virgilius de Lille, was at Fernei when the diſgrace of M. Turgot was made public. Voltaire knew well the regard the Tranſlator of the Georgics had for that miniſter. He immediately quoted theſe words, from the ode of Horace to Virgil, on the death of Quintilius:

Multis ille bonis flebilis occidit;
Nulli flebilior quàm tibi, Virgili.

How did the good, the virtuous mourn,
And pour their ſorrows o'er his urn?
But, Virgil, thine the loudeſt ſtrain.

FRANCI

When Voltaire came to Paris, M. Turgot haſtened to ſee him. He was then very much troubled with the gout, which had rendered him hardly able to move his legs. After the firſt compliments, Voltaire, turning towards the company, ſaid, "When I look on M. Turgot, I think I ſee "the ſtatue of Nebuchadnezzar." "Yes; the feet of "clay,

" clay, replied the miniſter."—" And the head of " gold! the head of gold!" returned Voltaire.

At the age of eighty-four, Voltaire paſſed whole nights in correcting his tragedy of Irene. He told the actreſs who was to perform the principal character: " I have been laboring for you all night, " as if I were a young man of twenty." When this enthuſiaſtic ardor was abated, he ſaid to ſome of his friends—Do you not think me very childiſh?—In ſhort, his paſſion for admiration and applauſe ſometimes bordered on puerility. A young painter, who had been ſometime at Fernei, coming to give him the firſt information of the ſucceſs of his Irene; Voltaire, who was then in bed, caught him in his arms, rolled over him, and exclaimed in all the agitation of vanity compleatly gratified, " Have I then the happineſs to pleaſe " the public in my old age, as much as I pleaſed " it in my youth!"

Voltaire was a member of almoſt all the academies of Europe, though he did not think that academies had ever given birth to any great diſcoveries in philoſophy, or produced any great genius in eloquence, poetry, or painting. He long

long continued to publiſh ſeveral things againſt the French Academy, which had preferred the verſes of the Abbé du Jarri to his ode. Can we wonder that thoſe who poſſeſs real abilities will not write for the prize of an acedemy which judges ſo ill?

He ſays, in a letter to the Abbé Mouſſinot, who had ſent him the collection of Prize Poems of the French Academy, inſtead of the Memoirs of the Academy of Sciences. "You have miſtaken the "wretched French Academy for the Academy of "Sciences. A man once, who had ſent for eigh-"teen ſwans (cignes) to put into his canal, re-"ceived, inſtead of them, eighteen monkeys, "(ſinges.) I ſeem to have gotten thirty-one "monkeys inſtead of the eighteen ſwans I wanted. "Pray let me beg of you to procure me the "volumes of the real Academy, and I will return "you the fulſome compliments of this inſipid "French Academy."

He afterwards ſpoke in a very different manner of this body, when it was compoſed of his own admirers. He repreſented it as an aſſembly of the firſt men in the nation, and an honor to literature.

He thought leſs favorably of the Academies in the Provinces, which often produce men uſeful in the magiſtracy, the army, or the church, though but

few

few diſtinguiſhed in the polite arts. He therefore very little regarded their frequent offers of admiſſion.

He was a member of the Academy of Bourdeaux; though, in his Candide, he has indulged in rather a ſevere pleaſantry, on that body, and the futility of the queſtions propoſed by them. Yet a collection of the prize pieces of this Academy, which has produced ſeveral men of the greateſt merit, would be very intereſting.

The Academy of Angers had admitted him one of their number; nevertheleſs, in all his ſatirical pieces againſt Freron, he always put, after the name of Maſter Aliboron, (which that ingenious critic ſo little deſerved) the title, *Of the Academy of Angers.*

He wrote to Viſcledé, Secretary to the Academy of Marſeilles, that he loved Academies, but that he loved Republics ſtill more. This is a proof of the little eſteem in which he held the honors ſhewn him by theſe literary ſocieties in the provinces.

A member of the Academy of C**, was recounting to him one day all its privileges, and concluded with ſaying, "It was the eldeſt daughter "of the French Academy: "Yes," ſaid Voltaire, in reply, "She is certainly a good girl, for her ex- "ploits have never been much talked of."

He

He was more fond of being admitted into foreign Academies than thoſe of France, and was particularly vain of the title of Fellow of the Royal Society of London. He was alſo a member of ſeveral Italian Academies. That of the Arcades, which is one of the moſt celebrated, being deſirous to diſtinguiſh Voltaire, gave him the ſurname of Musæo, meaning the Poet: or, The Favorite of the Muses.

Voltaire was much diſſatisfied at never having ſeen Rome. That city, he would frequently ſay, has always been the capital of Europe; but his extreme licentiouſneſs in ſpeaking and thinking, which was his ruling paſſion in the latter years of his life, neither permitted him to go to Venice, where he would have been watched by the Inquiſitors of the State; nor to Rome, where he would have been in danger from thoſe of the Holy Office. He dared not even truſt himſelf in Savoy. He had for more than twenty years deſired to take the benefit of the waters of Aix, and had aſked permiſſion of the court of Turin, but received for anſwer, from the King of Sardinia, that his dominions were open to all who had been guilty of no crime, and that he had therefore only to examine his conſcience. It is well known, however, that

that orders had been given to arreſt him. This Prince, whom he called the Gaoler of the Alps, would have taken ſufficient care to provide for his ſecurity. Voltaire, therefore, did not dare to expoſe himſelf to the reſentment of ſo religious a Monarch, who had often complained he was already but too near his territories.

Voltaire often repeated, *Qui bene latuit bene vixit*, but this maxim had no place in his heart. No perſon was more jealous of his fame, or leſs avoided malignity and envy, by ſilence and retirement. I, he would ſometimes ſay, am like the huſband of a coquette, whom every one enjoys more than himſelf.

Oeconomy, he has often declared, is the ſource of liberality; and this maxim he reduced to practice much more effectually than his Latin one.

Amid that barbariſm into which the fine arts are beginning to fall, it is fortunate that we have had ſome writers who have defended the cauſe of true taſte. Voltaire was of the number. He gave no quarter to that affected and abſurd jargon which deſtroys all propriety of metaphor, and ſtrength of

of ſentiment; nor to that ridiculous mixture of plain and poetical language, which disfigures the works of ſeveral of our proſe authors. He has ſomewhere ſaid in ridicule of this wretched taſte,

Euclid in blank verſe let us ſee;
In fuſtian dreſs philoſophy;
And ſince ideas thus you want,
Aſtoniſh fools with ſound and rant;
Batter our ears with words and bellow,
To prove Racine a ſilly fellow.

But what deprived him of all patience, was, to find declamation and bombaſt employed to give importance to things, in themſelves, of little conſequence. He ridiculed, and with reaſon, the ſtyle of thoſe authors who accompany every word with an epithet. It were to be wiſhed, ſaid he, we could make theſe gentlemen underſtand that redundance is actual poverty; and the adjective often the greateſt enemy to the ſubſtantive, though they agree ſo well in number, gender and caſe.

He was a great admirer of Mademoiſelle Clairon; I knew not, ſays he, in one of his letters, the merit of this actreſs; I had not even an idea of ſuch finiſhed and animated acting. I had been accuſtomed to the cold declamation of our cold theatres,

theatres, and had only ſeen actors who began to ſpout, as ſoon as they heard the cue, before an audience of petits maitres.

He confeſſed, however, he had never ſeen the true pathetic, in tragic acting, till Madame Dumeſnil appeared. " Baron, ſaid he, was noble and elegant. Madamoiſelle le Couvreur poſſeſſed grace, ſimplicity, and propriety. But we firſt beheld true pathos in Madame Dumeſnil; when, in Merope, with diſtraction in her eyes, and ſuffocation in her voice, ſhe lifted her palſied hand to ſtab her child." He preferred extravagance in acting to frigidity. " On the ſtage (ſaid he, addreſſing himſelf equally to the poet and the actor) it is frequently better to ſtrike forcibly than juſtly."

What Voltaire has ſaid of ſome perſons, in power, may with great juſtice be applied to himſelf. " When you wait on them in the morning, " you ſhould enquire, of their valet, what news " from the water-cloſet." It is certain his temper was very unequal, and altered according as he had reſted at night, or digeſted his ſupper. It is not therefore ſurprizing there ſhould be ſo great a diſagreement in the accounts given by different travellers, of the reception they met with, from the philoſopher at Fernei.

If

If he was in one of his good-humoured moments, they were come to raiſe him from the dead. He had no life in him, but they had reſtored him to exiſtence. But if want of ſleep, or pain, or two great application to any favorite ſtudy, rendered him diſpleaſed with his viſitors, he was not to be ſeen: or, if he ſhewed himſelf, for a moment, it was only to expreſs his impatience, and to give vent to a few ſevere and ſatirical repartees. More incommoded than flattered, by the crouds who came to viſit him out of curioſity, and to ſay, they had ſeen him, he frequently received them with moroſeneſs. "Theſe people, ſaid he, to Madame Denis, take me for the wild beaſt of the Gevaudan. Say, I am not at home. Say I am dead."

When this little pettiſhneſs was over, Voltaire was in fact of a good diſpoſition, and eaſily managed by thoſe about him. He permitted, during a part of the winter, a noiſy dancing, among his domeſtics, in a hall adjoining to his apartment. He gave way to the whims of an old houſekeeper, and repeatedly excuſed the offences of a drunken ſervant, who was perpetually threatened and never puniſhed. "At bottom, ſaid he, to the Abbé "Trublet, I am undoubtedly a good kind of man."

And

And this was true, at certain times. The ſame has been ſaid of many other men of letters, of too iraſcible a character. But they had this advantage over Voltaire, that their paſſions and ill humors were confined to their domeſtics, while the ſage of Fernei, giving himſelf up in his ſatires to his deſire of revenge, poſterity will be induced to believe his reſentment was as durable as violent. It is to no purpoſe to alledge, that his being ſo often attacked, by the critics, had rendered him too irritable; and that there is a vanity, which, when wounded, admits of no cure.

He never forgave Freron. Next to flattery, the moſt certain method of putting him in a good humor, was to inform him of ſome epigram againſt that Journaliſt. One day, walking in his garden with a gentleman from Geneva, the latter perceiving a toad, ſaid to him, "There is a Freron." "What has that poor animal done to you, replied Voltaire, that you ſhould abuſe it in that manner?"

He allowed, notwithſtanding, that this toad of Parnaſſus poſſeſſed real good taſte, and pointed him out, to a nobleman of Turin, as the perſon who beſt could give him a juſt idea of the new publications which appeared in France.

He even endeavored to concilitate his favor, and wrote ſeveral letters to M. Morand, the celebrated ſurgeon, to deſire he would perſuade Freron to ſoften his criticiſms; but he, prejudiced againſt Voltaire by the Abbé des Fontaines, always defied the author of the Henriade, and often made himſelf dreaded.

The private and real opinion Voltaire entertained of the works of ſeveral writers, whom he flattered, was nearly the ſame with that which Freron openly avowed in his critical publications. This ought to have reconciled them: but many reaſons prevented their union. Perſons may poſſeſs the ſame principles of taſte, and yet, by particular circumſtances, be forced into widely different parties. When we read the following paſſage, in Voltaire, it cannot be doubted but that he and Freron thought the ſame of the greateſt part of books, with which we are inundated. "Good authors, ſays he, employ no more wit than is neceſſary; their thoughts are never far fetched, but conceived with good ſenſe, and expreſſed with perſpicuity. At preſent our writers ſeem to deal in enigmas, nothing is ſimple, but every thing affected and unnatural."

The

The friends of Voltaire continually endeavored to cure him of his extreme ſuſceptibility at the ſlighteſt criticiſm, by reminding him of the great fame he had acquired. When he was laſt at Paris, ſomebody having ſaid to him, "You cannot but allow the homage you receive ought to be conſidered as a ſufficient amends for the feeble attacks which have been made on your fame." "Yes, replied he, I am like Spartacus, aſtoniſhed at my own glory!"

This glory was in fact prejudicial to him; the continual viſits and compliments he was obliged to receive injured his health. He confeſſed, himſelf, that he was ſtifled with roſes, and had always foreſeen this embarraſſment and danger in the capital.

"Paris, (ſays he, in a letter written to Ma-
"dame de Chambonin in 1740) is a gulph, which
"ſwallows up all peace and reſt of mind,
"where life is one continual tumult. I am
"drawn into the whirlpools of irregularity in
"ſpite of myſelf. I go and come: I ſup at one
"end of the city, one evening, to ſup the next at
"another. From the ſociety of three or four
"friends I am obliged to hurry to the opera or
"the comedy. I am forced to ſee rarities, like a
"ſtranger; to embrace a hundred perſons in a
"day, and make and receive a hundred proteſ-
tations

" tations. I have not a moment to myſelf, nor " time to write, think, or ſleep. I am like thoſe " who were put to death by being ſmothered with " flowers."

If this continual round of honor and pleaſure fatigued him ſo much at fifty, what effect could it be expected to produce on him when laboring under all the infirmities of eighty, and when tranquillity and temperance were abſolutely neceſſary? His death therefore followed cloſe on his glory.

While Voltaire ſacrificed to the Muſes, on the banks of the Lake of Geneva, he had rivals, in Switzerland, who, though not his equals in reputation, were probably far more happy, becauſe they peaceably enjoyed their virtues and their fame. At the head of theſe reſpectable men was Bodmer, the Neſtor of Switzerland, and the Patriarch of German literature. Intimately acquainted with the Grecian writers, he taught his countrymen to imitate their beauties. Every branch of the Belles Lettres is equally indebted to him. I have ſeen (ſays Mr. Coxe*) with affection and reſpect, this old man, almoſt eighty, who ſtill pre-

* After the moſt careful examination we can find no ſuch paſſage in Coxe's Switzerland, and know not where elſe to look. T.

ſerves the fire and gaiety of youth. His reſemblance to Voltaire appeared to me ſtriking; the ſame features, the ſame face, the ſame geſtures. The color of his eyes only is a little different, and his features, taken altogether, are ſomewhat more delicate. I mentioned this aſtoniſhing conormit y, and he made me the following remarkable reply: *My fame would be fully compleat, if I every way reſembled M. de Voltaire; but perhaps he would be happier, if he more reſembled me.*

The ſame canton, Zurich, which has produced Bodmer, has given birth to Geſner, author of the celebrated poem of the Death of Abel. He has, for ſome time, renounced poetry, to cultivate painting, and he is preparing an edition of his works in quarto; every decoration of which is to be entirely his own: he is at once the deſigner and engraver of the plates. This excellent writer poſſeſſes an affability and modeſty which render him the delight of all his countrymen.

Haller, like the fabulous god Apollo, added poetical abilities to a profound knowledge of medicine. He is eſteemed the *Pope* of Germany. He has ſucceſsfully imitated the bold and vervous

ſtyle

ſtyle of the Engliſh poet, and his philoſophy is perhaps preferable to his works of imagination.

The mildneſs of his character made him pity thoſe literati who endeavor to deſtroy the reputation of every competitor. He eſpecially ſhunned being drawn into any literary conteſt. When Voltaire complained to him of Graffet, he blamed him for ſuffering ſuch a trifle to give him ſo much uneaſineſs. "Providence, ſaid he, I perceive, "diſtributes its favors with an equal hand. It "has laviſhed on you both riches and glory; but "the equilibrium is maintained by your too great "ſenſibility. If wiſhes were of any avail, I would "form one which would reſtore you that tranquil-"lity, ſo ſeldom attendant on genius, and you "ſhould become, at once, the moſt celebrated "and the happieſt man in Europe."

The violence of Voltaire's character prevented Haller from maintaining any great intimacy with him. The diſlike he entertained to the man, would not ſuffer him to eſteem the writer; of this Voltaire was not ignorant. One day, as he was praiſing Haller in the preſence of a flatterer, who lived with that celebrated naturaliſt, "Ah, "Sir, (ſaid the deceitful friend of Haller) how "much it is to be wiſhed he would ſpeak thus "of your works." Voltaire directly replied, "Perhaps we may be both miſtaken." In fact,

Haller, both as a practical philoſopher and a man, was much ſuperior to Voltaire. The cauſe of truth and reaſon was defended by his writings, and religion honored by his life. Being elected to a ſhare of the government of Bern, he wiſely tempered juſtice with mildneſs and mercy.

Good taſte, or a ready perception of a fault among beauties, or a beauty among faults, was, in the opinion of Voltaire, a quality partly natural and partly acquired; but he lamented the prodigious number of human creatures, eſpecially in cold and moiſt climates, who have not, and ſcarcely can acquire, the ſmalleſt ſpark of this taſte. To obtain it, we muſt have a perfect knowledge of the beſt authors; and to reliſh the beauties of their writings, we muſt underſtand every nicety of the language in which they have been written.

"This knowledge, ſaid Voltaire, is not to be haſ-
"tily acquired. It is at firſt a labor and not a plea-
"ſure. It reſembles thoſe games which afford no
"amuſement till we have made ſome proficiency.
"I have known ſeveral ſtrangers, at Paris, unable
"to diſtinguiſh between the ſtyle of Racine and
"that of Danchet. I have ſeen them buy new
"romances inſtead of *Zaïde*, and have remarked, in
"ſeveral foreign countries, the perſons who are best
"informed have not always the juſteſt taſte, ſince

"I have

" I have frequently heard them quote with much " ſatisfaction, the leaſt ſtriking paſſages in their " celebrated authors, not being able to diſtinguiſh " the real diamonds from the counterfeit.

" Taſte is the lot only of a ſmall number of " diſtinguiſhed minds. The employments which " depend on chicane, finance, or commerce, are " commonly inimical to the fine arts. It is the diſ- " grace of the human mind, that taſte is only to be " found in a kind of opulent idleneſs. I knew a " clerk in the public offices at Verſailles, who had " an excellent underſtanding, and would frequent- " ly ſay, I am very unfortunate, I have not time " to acquire a good taſte."

A few defects in taſte, could not prevent Voltaire from doing juſtice to genius. Notwithſtanding the criticiſms of Boileau, he was always an admirer of Taſſo, whoſe great poetic talents entirely hide a few defects. He was a ſtill greater admirer of Arioſto. An Abbé, who was his intimate acquaintance, returning from Italy, aſked Voltaire, " Whether he did not think Arioſto " a great poet?" " A great poet," replied Voltaire, with vivacity, " He is the greateſt of poets. His " Orlando is an enchanted palace, in which the " groteſque is mixed with the majeſtic, without

" either

" either degrading the other. It is at once the " Iliad, the Odyſſey, and Don Quixote."

As to Taſſo, he thought him, in many reſpects, ſuperior to Homer, eſpecially in the deſcriptions of his battles. " How forcible, ſaid Voltaire, " and affecting are his pictures! How juſt and ani- " mated his ſtyle! How much inferior are the ge- " nerality of our French poets to this great man. " La Motte has tranſlated the Iliad with as much " coldneſs as if it had been the Enchiridion of " Epictetus."

An author cannot always ſubmit to the cenſures of his friends. Somebody having adviſed Voltaire to make ſeveral alterations in one of his pieces, " There are, ſaid he, conſtitutional diſeaſes; a per- " ſon who has a hunch back, cannot be cured of " it; my child has a hunch, yet he is in very good " health."

Critical cenſures generally rendered him peeviſh, and he ſeldom replied to them but by a repartee.

Fontenelle, after the firſt repreſentation of Oedipus, ſaid to the author, ſome previous compliments having been paid: " I could wiſh your " verſe were not quite ſo pompous, it would be " more eaſy and flowing, and better ſuited to " tragedy.

"tragedy." "Sir, replied Voltaire, that is a fault I intend to correct, and with that view will go directly and read your Paſtorals."

After having read his tragedy of Eriphile to the Abbé des Fontaines, he aſked him, "Well, how do you find it?—I do not think it a very good one." "So much the better, it is therefore excellent." But on this occaſion the public, and the Abbé were of the ſame opinion.

On the firſt performance of one of his tragedies, the ſucceſs of which was very equivocal, the Abbé Pellegrin complained loudly that Voltaire had ſtolen ſome verſes from him. "How can you, who are ſo rich, ſaid he, thus ſeize upon the property of another?" "What! replied Voltaire, have I ſtolen from you? I no longer wonder that my piece has met with ſo little approbation."

When Piron ſaid to him, after the repreſentation of his Semiramis, which had been much criticiſed by a great part of the ſpectators. "You would have been very glad if I had written this piece; "Yes, replied Voltaire, I am ſtill ſo much your friend."

He

He did not approve the poetry of Piron. Le Kain, when very young, intending to give him a ſpecimen of his declamation, propoſed a ſcene in Piron's Guſtavus. "No, no, ſaid Voltaire, I hate bad verſes: repeat what you can remember from Racine." Piron knew Voltaire's contempt of his tragedies, and he the leſs forgave him, as he had been on ſome occaſions deſirous to eclipſe him.

We cannot always perform ourſelves, ſaid Voltaire, what we adviſe our friends, and there are people hardy and vain enough to undertake any thing. A man of letters having altered ſome verſes, in the tragedy of Irene, ſhewed them to the poet. M. Perroneau, who built the magnificent bridge of Neuille, was preſent. "Ah! Monſieur Perroneau, ſaid Voltaire, how unfortunate it is you are not acquainted with this gentleman; he would have added another arch to your bridge."

Voltaire, from the firſt moment the Spirit of Laws appeared, ſeems to have declared war againſt that work. In his *Remercimens a un homme charitable* (Thanks to a charitable man) he ſpeaks of it as deſtitute of depth, perſpicuity, method, or meaning. This book, which ought to have been uſeful, was, ſaid he, only entertaining. The ſame things

things ſaid by another as learned, or even more learned than the author, would not have been read. He ſaw the writer of the Perſian Letters in it; nothing more: he ſhut his eyes on the profound legiſlator. Thiriot aſking him, "What he thought of that celebrated work," he replied, "It is Harlequin Grotius." He repeated the jeſt of Madame du Defant (C'eſt de l'Eſprit ſur les loix) It is wit concerning laws. Michael Montaigne turned legiſlator.

However he confeſſed, ſome time after, that, among a hundred paradoxes, there were a hundred uſeful truths, expreſſed with energy: and that the author's very errors were reſpectable, becauſe they evidently proceeded from a love of freedom, and a heart deeply impreſſed with a ſenſe of the rights of humanity. In ſhort, that if he ſometimes ſeemed to fall, it was but to ſoar ſtill higher.

Monteſquieu, perhaps, did not think even thus favorably of Voltaire. He conſidered him as a man of wit and imagination; but thought him frequently betrayed into errors by thoſe brilliant endowments. "Voltaire, ſays he, ſomewhere, has too much wit to underſtand me. When he reads a book he affixes to it a new meaning of his own, and afterwards writes againſt that meaning."

Thoſe

Thoſe who were intimate with the Preſident de Monteſquieu, know, that he deſcribed our poet as a man of a paſſionate and violent diſpoſition; and the writings of La Beaumelle, whoſe patron and friend he was, did not at all incline him to change his opinion. "A good heart is better than a witty head," ſaid Monteſquieu, in one of his letters relative to the diſgrace of Voltaire at Berlin.

Monteſquieu's declamation againſt poets and poetry, in his Perſian Letters, had no doubt irritated Voltaire. "He had, ſays the poet, the paltry "vanity to believe, that Homer and Virgil are cy-"phers, when compared to one who has ſucceſſ-"fully imitated the *Siamois* of Dufreſni, and who "has filled a book with bold aſſertions, without "which it would never have been read. He aſks, "What is an epic poem, and replies, He does "not know. Then ſays, he deſpiſes lyric com-"poſitions as much as he admires tragedies. "He ought not, however, to deſpiſe Pindar and "Horace. Ariſtotle did not deſpiſe Pindar."

More than one proſe writer have, like Monteſquieu, pretended to deſpiſe poetry.—We may apply to ſuch the remark of Montaigne. We cannot attain to it, let us avenge ourſelves by decrying it.

Vol-

Voltaire was offended with thoſe who were of opinion tragedy might be written in proſe, becauſe, as they ſaid, epic poems had been ſo written; and the continual return of maſculine and feminine rhimes produced a languid monotony. "It is true, ſaid he, rhime only renders indif-"ferent poetry ſtill more tireſome. The poet, "then, reſembles an unſkilful mechanic, who, "while the automaton moves, ſuffers the noiſe "of his ſprings and pullies to be heard. The "reader is as much fatigued by his rhimes as "he himſelf was while inventing them. His "verſes conſiſt merely in the jingling of ſylla-"bles. But if both his thoughts and his rhimes "are happy, he at once experiences and com-"municates a pleaſure which can only be taſted "by a feeling mind and a muſical ear."

Voltaire, when he grew in years, ſometimes neglected purity of ſtyle and propriety of expreſſion. He was leſs careful and leſs correct; either becauſe he had contracted a kind of indolence through age, or confided in his great reputation, or elſe had experienced that the ſucceſs of a work, even in verſe, does not depend, provided it poſſeſſes intrinſic merit, on a trifling incorrectneſs of ſtyle. But age could not abate the warmth of his imagi-

imagination, for he ſtill preſerved, in his latter productions, all the fire of his earlier compoſitions.

Among his poetical cotemporaries, in other nations, he honored none with entire approbation except Pope and Metaſtaſio. When propoſals were ſent to him for a ſubſcription to the works of the latter; "I could wiſh, ſaid he to the editor, that "my name might be placed at the head of the "ſubſcribers, in deſpite of the alphabet."

Like the ſenator, Pococurante, he thought very little of the German poets, who deſcribe Nature with propriety and ſimplicity: but are too profuſe in common-place images.

"All partial evil univerſal good," is a verſe of Pope's, and contains the whole ſyſtem of optimiſm; a ſyſtem contrary to the doctrine of The Fall of Man, and which has been refuted by ſeveral divines. Voltaire alſo has ridiculed it, though not for the ſame reaſons.

"That, ſays he, is a ſtrange univerſal good "which is compoſed of the evils ſuffered by in-"dividuals. What can be more unintelligible? "What can be meant when we are told, All is for "the beſt. Is it for the beſt with reſpect to us? "Certainly not. Is it with reſpect to God?

"Un-

" Undoubtedly God neither ſuffers nor enjoys " our evils. What then in fact is this platonic " notion? A chaos, like that of all other ſyſ- " tems, though into it diamonds have been caſt. " The lives of thoſe who in England were loudeſt " in exclaiming, *All is for the beſt*, did not prove " the truth of their doctrine. Shafteſbury, who " firſt brought it into faſhion, was a very unfor- " tunate man. I have ſeen Bolingbroke a prey " to vexation and rage, and Pope, whom he em- " ployed to put this wretched ſyſtem into verſe, " was the man moſt to be pitied of any I have " known; miſhapen in body, diſſatisfied in mind, " always ill, always a burthen to himſelf, and " haraſſed by a hundred enemies to his very laſt " moment. Let thoſe at leaſt be fortunate and " proſperous who tell us, All is for the beſt.

" Man is a very miſerable being, who enjoys a " few hours of relaxation, and ſhort intervals of " ſatisfaction, amid a life of calamity. 'Man " that is born of a woman is of a few days, and " full of trouble; he cometh up and is cut down " like a flower, he fleeth like a ſhadow and con- " tinueth not.' This was ſaid by Job three thou- " ſand years ago, and human nature has not ſince " undergone any material alteration."

Voltaire compared the framers of ſyſtems to thoſe who dance a minuet, who are in continual motion without advancing a ſtep, and who conclude by returning to the place from whence they ſet out.

" The greateſt admirer of a great writer, ſays the Abbé Trublet, is commonly himſelf; and Voltaire, who was the firſt French author of the age, was alſo the moſt egregious literary Narciſſus." I cannot conceive how the Marquis de Luchet could aſſert, " That Voltaire never ſpoke of his own works." Mr. Sherlock, more ſincere, or leſs political, remarks, on the contrary, " That Voltaire always ſpoke with the greateſt heat of his own productions," and thoſe who have lived with him have had frequent opportunities of making the ſame obſervation with that ingenious Engliſh traveller.

Voltaire was not only highly irritated by any criticiſms on his writings, but not a little offended by praiſes, when ſubject to any reſtriction.

" The mind of this extraordinary man, ſays Mr. Sherlock, teemed with every kind of ambition; but literary ambition was moſt predominant: nothing could ſubdue it." Fontenelle, ſays

ſays the Abbé Trublet, was much better ſatisfied with the public than Voltaire, and would neither have changed with him his reputation or his character. It is certain he was naturally more diſpoſed to be contented. There is a ſelf-ſatisfaction which ariſes from vanity, preſumption, and an ignorance of the real value of things. There is another which proceeds from moderation, modeſty, and reaſon: the latter was not poſſeſſed by Voltaire.

It is to be remembered, ſaid Voltaire, and he has repeated the remark in one of his Diatribæ, that the author of a work of merit ſhould beware of three things; the Title, the Epiſtle Dedicatory, and the Preface. Yet have we known an author, ſays M. Luchet, who has given to his works the moſt ridiculous titles, who has written fourteen Epiſtles Dedicatory, and eleven Prefaces.—— *Thou art the man.*

Or ſage or wit, or you who wiſh to be,
Without a maſter live, if you'd live free.

Said Voltaire after he left Pruſſia: He ought to have ſaid ſo before he went thither.

Be

Be reſolute, ſaid La Beaumelle to him, and at length be free; for hitherto you have only complimented liberty. He himſelf ſaid, ſometime after,

Oft was I falſe to her I moſt adore;
I've ſeen my error, and am falſe no more:
I knew not bliſs till, tir'd of Slav'ry grown,
I dar'd to live for Liberty, alone.

We are often more prejudiced in favor of names than things. Voltaire uſed frequently to relate that ſeveral of the principal wits of France (among others the Prince of Vendome, the Chevalier de Bouillon, the Abbé de Buſſi, who had more underſtanding than his father, and ſeveral companions of Bachaumont, Chapelle, and the celebrated Ninon de l'Enclos) ſupping together, were ſpeaking againſt La Motte Houdart all in their power. The fables of that author had juſt been publiſhed, and were treated by this company with the utmoſt contempt. They aſſerted, he was wholly unable to approach the excellence of the moſt indifferent fable of La Fontaine. Voltaire then mentioned an edition of La Fontaine, lately publiſhed, and talked of ſeveral new fables added from the papers of Madame de Bouillon: one of which he pretended to recite. Accordingly

ingly they were all in tranſport, and exclaimed, "How different from the ſtyle of La Motte! "What preciſion! What elegance! Every word "proves it to be La Fontaine's." Voltaire had been laughing at them. The fable was really by La Motte.

Voltaire, by relating this anecdote, did not detract from the merit of La Fontaine, at leaſt of thoſe things, by La Fontaine, which are really good. He did not think, and, in this, impartial judges are of the ſame opinion, that all his fables have equal merit. Perſons of taſte will never confound his fable of the two Pigeons with that of the Graſshopper and the Ant, or that of the Crow and the Fox. What children are taught to repeat ſhould poſſeſs the greateſt ſimplicity, though it may not have the greateſt excellence. The verſes which are become Proverbs are not always the moſt deſerving to be remembered. There are things which are in every one's mouth, though they poſſeſs not any great merit: as ſeveral trivial ſongs are frequently ſung without being much eſteemed. Thus, in the fables of La Fontaine, a man of taſte will carefully diſtinguiſh between that ſimplicity which approaches vulgarity, and that natural elegance with which this author abounds. But in whatever manner we

judge of his works, there is no doubt but he will be as much admired by poſterity as he is at preſent, becauſe his beauties are accommodated to every underſtanding and every age.

M. Vernet, the Raphael of marine painters, came, as well as many other artiſts did, to viſit Voltaire. You, ſaid the poet to him, in anſwer to ſome compliment, cannot miſs of immortality: your colors are at once brilliant and durable. —My colors, replied the painter, are by no means ſo durable as your ink.

The library of Voltaire was neither ſo numerous, nor ſo varied as his fortune and the extent of his knowledge ſeemed to require. He thought we ought to ſet bounds to our reading, and that when we had ſeen a certain number of authors we had ſeen all.

Thoſe common-place ideas, with which ſo many books both in proſe and verſe are filled, appeared to him contemptible. Aurora opening, with her roſy fingers, the gates of the eaſt, and ſcattering before the chariot of the ſun, topazes and pearls; Zephyr careſſing Flora; Love playing with the arms

arms of Mars; the comparing pleaſures to roſes, and pains to thorns, were, originally, no doubt, the invention of wit and imagination: he who firſt gave birth to them may be juſtly conſidered as a maſter in eloquence and poetry; but, at preſent, all thoſe images have been ſo frequently uſed, that he who ſhould again employ them would only be thought a trite declaimer.

In Telemachus, princes are compared to ſhepherds, bulls, lions, and wolves greedy of carnage. The author had need of all the charms with which his ſtyle abounds to prevent theſe compariſons from becoming inſipid. This was the opinion of Voltaire, but more exalted or uncommon images would not, perhaps, have been proper for a work intended for the inſtruction of a young Prince, who required leſſons which might convey inſtruction in an agreeable manner, and be eaſily underſtood.

If we find, in the Henriade, compariſons more new and ingenious, it is becauſe Voltaire, coming after Fenelon, could not repeat the ſame images. Beſides he has copied many of his ſimilies from the Italian and Engliſh poets; a circumſtance he did not always conceal. He looked

on every thing as imitation. The moſt original writers, ſaid he, borrowed one from another. Boyardo has imitated Pulci, and Arioſto Boyardo. The inſtruction we find in books is like fire; we fetch it from our neighbour, kindle it at home, communicate it to others, and it becomes the property of all.

Notwithſtanding Voltaire's ambition to be the Alexander of literature, and excel in every department of ſcience, he made ſeveral confeſſions to his friends which would have done honor to his candor, had he made them to the public. In a letter to M. Berger, in 1736, he writes thus: "I have been guilty of folly. I have written "an Opera. But I was hurried away by my "deſire to write for ſo great a man as Rameau. "I conſidered only *his* genius, and did not per- "ceive that *mine*, if indeed I poſſeſs any, was no "way ſuited to lyric compoſitions; and I told "him, not long ago, I would rather have written "an Epic Poem than have undertaken a work "of that kind; not becauſe I deſpiſe this ſpecies "of writing, there is none to be deſpiſed, but "becauſe it requires talents of which I believe "I am entirely deſtitute."

He,

He, however, wrote another work of the ſame kind, but was obliged to confeſs he had not ſucceeded. "Thoſe (writes he in a letter to the Abbé Duvernet) "who told you that, in 1744 "and 1745, I was a courtier, informed you of a "melancholy truth. I was ſo, and repent my "weakneſs. Of all the time I have loſt in my "life, I certainly regret that the moſt. This was "not the period of my glory, if indeed I have "ever acquired glory. I raiſed, however, in "the year 1745, a Temple to Fame. The work "was undertaken by command. The public did "not approve the architecture of this temple; "nor, indeed, did I myſelf. Piron turned his "rats into it. I might have allotted him his "place in the cavern of Envy, which I had de-"ſcribed as at the entrance of the temple."

Though Voltaire ſays he was diſſatisfied with the architecture of his temple, it was long after it appeared; for in the firſt moments of his enthuſiaſm, he was ſo pleaſed with it, that he touched the arm of the late King, ſaying, "Is Trajan ſatisfied?" It is to be remarked that Trajan was the hero of this poem, and that, under the name of that Roman Emperor, he intended to celebrate the virtues and courage of Louis XV.

That

That Prince was not ungrareful. The Temple of Fame, and the Princeſs of Navarre, gained him the place of Gentleman in Ordinary to the Bedchamber. The *Henriade*, *Zaïre*, *Alzire*, and *Merope*, procured him neither reward nor favor from the King. But as he ſaid himſelf, honors and riches were ſhowered thick upon him for a wretched farce.

It has been aſſerted, in a collection of anecdotes, that Voltaire, after having read a work entitled the Soul of Beaſts, ſaid, to one of his friends, " The author is an excellent member of ſociety, " but not ſufficiently acquainted with the hiſtory " of his ſpecies.

Voltaire wrote compliments and flatteries with great facility, and with the ſame facility forgot what he had written. This many authors have experienced. The learned profeſſor Vernet ſuffered himſelf to be deceived by his fawning. When Voltaire firſt went to reſide near Geneva,—" He eſteemed both him and his writings—Tronchin ſhould have the care of his body and he of his ſoul." Thus, he ſaid, and thus he wrote, yet all theſe fine compliments were only introductory to the

the groſſeſt abuſe. D. Calmet had received Voltaire, at his Abbey, like a friend and a brother. The poet loaded him with compliments: he was an illuſtrious man, a man profoundly learned. But, after he was dead, he was a madman, a poor creature, a man who had not the leaſt judgment. All the literati in Paris knew Thiriot to be the moſt violent and indefatigable panegyriſt of Voltaire, to whom he had rendered the moſt eſſential ſervices: in every letter which the philoſopher of Fernei wrote to him, he was his dear friend, and his old friend; yet ſcarcely had this dear friend cloſed his eyes, when Voltaire treated him with a kind of contempt, in a letter to the King of Pruſſia, written in February, 1773. "We ſhall never find one to "replace Thiriot, our hiſtiographer in the coffee-"houſes. He acquitted himſelf to admiration in "this office. He knew by heart the few good "verſes and the many bad which were written in "Paris. He was, in ſhort, a man very uſeful to "the ſtate."

M. Berger, who had been once one of the confidential correſpondents of Voltaire at Cirei, experienced the ſame inconſtancy, as well as many other men of letters; nor is that at all ſurpriſing. Though

Though Voltaire was very ſenſible of a ſervice, as well as an offence, this ſenſibility could not be laſting in one who was inceſſantly employed in literary labors, who frequently changed his country and connexions, and who was careſſed and honored in every company. Thoſe careſſes and honors, however, never made him loſe ſight of his perſonal intereſt, and the advancement of his fortune. His genius was always in action. "If I had a hundred bodies, ſaid he one day, I ſhould weary them all." His mind being ſo loaded with ſuch a variety of occupations, his heart was not always able to act.

Beſides, Voltaire frequently took umbrage with very little reaſon. Thiriot, it is ſaid, not being willing to atteſt that the Abbé des Fontaines had written libels againſt him, in 1725, becauſe it was not true, Voltaire began to diſtruſt him. "As "we have our good angel, ſays he, in a letter to "Madame Chambonin, ſo have we alſo our evil "one, and Thiriot performs this office. I know "he has done me ſeveral injuries, but I will not "ſeem to know it. We ought to have too much "reſpect for ourſelves to enter into a diſpute "with our old friends, and we ought alſo to be "ſufficiently diſcreet not to put it in the power

"of

" of thoſe who have done us ſervice to do us " hurt."

Theſe are excellent maxims, but Voltaire's diſpoſition was too haſty and violent to permit him to obſerve them.

After the praiſes he had beſtowed on M. le Brun, who propoſed his educating the niece of the great Corneille, who would have expected him to retract whatever he had ſaid to his advantage? And why did he do this? Becauſe M. le Brun had been commended in the Critical Obſervations of M. Clement, and therefore appeared connected with the author of thoſe ſtrictures on M. de Voltaire.

" Satire never appears ſo odious as when it is " directed againſt thoſe whom we have before " praiſed. Such a retractation is only humili- " ating to its author. If he is diſpleaſed, with " the perſon he has commended, he ought to " keep ſilence, and not contradict what he has " before ſaid, and condemn himſelf." This is Voltaire's own doctrine, when ſpeaking of J. B. Rouſſeau, we may here again juſtly exclaim, *Thou art the Man.*

We may add, that, as Voltaire frequently altered his opinion of thoſe whom he had miſtruſted, he ought to have been on his guard againſt the firſt emotions

emotions of his anger. Notwithſtanding his ſuſpicions of Thiriot, he afterwards renewed the ſtricteſt friendſhip with him; and when he was laſt at Paris, he acknowledged the merit of M. le Brun, who was among the number of thoſe literati who celebrated his return to that capital.

Voltaire, in his youth, had the misfortune to be ſeduced into a love of gaming. He loſt one evening, at the houſe of Madame de Fontaine Martel, ten thouſand livres (above four hundred pounds) at Biribi, as has been already ſaid. Poetry, literature and philoſophy cured him of this paſſion, and he played no more, except at cheſs: the greater part of thoſe games which we have borrowed from the Spaniards, Italians, or Engliſh, appeared to him very inſipid.

Voltaire uſed to relate, as an inſtance of the bewitching nature of gaming, that he had known an old woman, formerly addicted to play, and extremely indigent, who uſed to make broth for ſome other poor players, for the ſake of being permitted to look on.

In 1742, he gave, at Bruſſels, a little entertainment to the Marchioneſs du Chatelet and ſome other ladies, who were rather too fond of play. It

was

was expected there would have been a great deal of verſe in an entertainment given by a poet. He, however, only exhibited a large firework, which diſplayed this motto in large and luminous letters, *Je ſuis du jeu, va tout.* (I play, here goes for all.) "This, ſaid he, in a letter to M. Berger, had no "effect on theſe ladies, though I meant it for "their reproof and amendment."

One of Voltaire's greateſt pleaſures was to read the memoirs of able advocates on intereſting cauſes, or even on thoſe of little conſequence, when they were ably treated. He preferred a well written factum (or caſe) to an indifferenr literary work. Yet he conſidered the ſtyle of the bar as no leſs corrupt than every other. Speaking of a diſcourſe pronounced in parliament, by *Friend*, he ſays, "It is a diſcourſe ſtrong and conciſe, "without common-place or epithet; he does not "*invoke* a teſtimony or a law, he atteſts and cites "them. He does not call a conjecture a demon- "ſtration, nor ſhew diſreſpect to the auguſt aſ- "ſembly of the parliament by low and contemp- "tible witticiſms. In ſhort, he ſpeaks with equal "ſtrength and modeſty." With reſpect to the expreſſion, invoking a law, he uſed to ſay, "That thoſe who made uſe of it ought to invoke good taſte."

Several

Several authors, who have attacked the errors of M. de Voltaire, have written, "That, at the approach of death, he expreſſed the greateſt fear and remorſe." Certainly, nothing is more probable, yet M. Luchet pretends, that his regret at leaving life has been conſtrued into a dread of futurity and repentance of the paſt; that when he was ill in 1765, he took meaſure for a tomb to be placed near his church at Fernei, ſaying, "At leaſt, I will not be reproached as deſtitute of foreſight;" and that in this illneſs he was very merry, and repeated, to thoſe about him, verſes from Hudibras, in ridicule of phyſicians.

Theſe anecdotes may be true, but if Voltaire did not loſe his uſual gaiety, it muſt be becauſe he did not believe his illneſs would prove mortal. On other occaſions, when the grave ſeemed open before him, he was certainly extremely alarmed. When he was ill, at Paris, in 1745, he confeſſed, and ſubmitted to every reparation his confeſſor required to expiate the dangerous pieces he had publiſhed. He was abſolutely in an agony, as we have been aſſured by M. Tronchin, his phyſician, and other perſons worthy of credit.

Beſides, lively imaginations are naturally inclined to religion, eſpecially if they have early imbibed

imbibed the principles of piety. This reflexion, alone, is ſufficient to prevent our believing that Voltaire expected his laſt moments with all that tranquillity and indifference ſome of his admirers have pretended: though others confeſs that, at ſuch times, he ſufferedthe moſt violent agitations.

Reſolution and firmneſs of ſoul was not the moſt conſpicuous quality in Voltaire. We appeal to any of his partiſans, who cooly and impartially conſider his character. As ſoon as he had publiſhed a book, which might endanger his tranquillity, or his liberty, he made diſavowal after diſavowal: he left nothing untried; and even wrote to thoſe authors who had criticiſed his works, and whom he pretended moſt to deſpiſe. The following is one of his letters to the Abbé Coger, profeſſor of rhetoric in the Mazarin College:

" It is a great pity, Sir, that you ſhould ca-
" lumniate men and academicians, with whom
" you are ſo little acquainted. In your *critique*
" on Beliſarius you have conſidered me as the
" author of a Poem on Natural Religion: I have
" never written any poem with ſuch a title.
" About thirty years ago I wrote one on Natural

" Law,

" Law, which is widely different. You likewiſe " impute to me the Philoſophical Dictionary, the " work of a ſociety of literati in which I had " not the ſmalleſt ſhare. You have dared to " make an improper uſe of his Majeſty's name, " by ſaying, he expreſſed the greateſt indigna- " tion againſt this book, to the Preſident Hénaut " and to M. Capperonier. I have now before " me a letter, from the Preſident Hénaut, which " aſſures me, this ſhameleſs report is falſe. As " to M. Capperonier, I call his veracity to wit- " neſs, that there is no truth in what has been " ſaid. You have wiſhed to inſult and deſtroy " an old man of ſeventy-four years of age, who " in his retirement only employs himſelf in do- " ing good."

The Abbé Coger anſwered him in a letter which admitted of no reply. Though he acknowledged the good done by Voltaire, on his eſtate, he did not fail to animadvert on the dangerous tendency of his writings. As to the indignation expreſſed by Louis XV. againſt the author of the Philoſophical Dictionary, it had been witneſſed by more than twenty perſons, even according to the confeſſion of the Preſident Hénaut, who, willing to conceal from Voltaire a diſagreeable and alarming truth, had written him a civil, but vague letter, which

which he pretended to underſtand as a denial of all that had been aſſerted.

Some partiſans of Voltaire may perhaps wiſh we had concealed theſe truths, but we may ſay of him as he has himſelf ſaid of Corneille. " What good " can I do him by flattering him, or what harm by " ſpeaking the truth? Have I undertaken a pane- " gyric, or work of public utility? Truth is pre- " ferable to Corneille, and we ought not to de- " ceive the living out of reſpect for the dead."

The moſt enthuſiaſtic admirers of Voltaire would not certainly wiſh his principles to be adopted by their wives and their valets. The author of a certain periodical publication aſſures us, that a nobleman, at court, who yet valued himſelf on being a freethinker, diſmiſſed his valet de chambre becauſe he ſurpriſed him reading the Philoſophical Dictionary, telling him, " That it was of the utmoſt conſequence, to him, that his wife and his domeſtics ſhould believe in a God." " What would become of us, ſaid the Abbé Rothelin one day to Voltaite, if our ſervants ſhould adopt the maxims you advance?"

Voltaire has ſaid himſelf, addreſſing thoſe authors who deny eternal puniſhments; " Gentlemen,

" men, all the world are not philoſophers, we " have to do with a number of knaves who never " give themſelves the trouble to reflect, with a " multitude of thieves, drunkards, and brutal " perſons; preach to them, if you pleaſe, that " there is no hell; for my part, I will perpetually " ſound in their ears they will be damned if " they rob me." This doctrine he actually did preach, one Sunday, in the church at Fernei; but his ſermon muſt appear too inconſiſtent, to a great part of his audience, for them to receive much benefit from his pious labours.

It was not merely becauſe he was his rival that he diſliked Crebillon: he ſtyled his verſification barbarous—" Electra and Rhadamiſtes are the " only two of his Pieces, ſaid he, that a man " who has the leaſt ear can endure to read; the " reſt are written in a ſtyle totally incorrect. They " are filled with unconnected periods, inflated " common-place, and long apoſtrophes to the " gods, becauſe he knew not how to addreſs " men." He wiſhed all dramatic poets to write like Racine, or form themſelves after his manner; but this is requiring a little too much, and treating rather too harſhly a rival, whoſe pencil may not be ſoft, but whoſe colors tho' gloomy, are truly tragical.

If

If he ſeemed to ſlight the eloquence of J. J. Rouſſeau, it was becauſe in the midſt of the moſt ſtriking beauties, there is ſometimes a mixture of bombaſt and declamation, with far-fetched thoughts obſcurely and incorrectly expreſſed. It muſt indeed be confeſſed, that when we read the work of an enemy, we regard the moſt trivial faults more than the greateſt beauties. Voltaire was moſt ſevere on his Eloiſe, of which the greater part of the letters appeared to him manifeſtly written for publication. Yet he ſelected ſeveral, of which he would have been glad to have been the author. Rouſſeau, on his ſide, could have wiſhed to tear out many pages from Voltaire, and had they both done this for each other, poſterity would probably have conſidered them as rendering it ſervice.

Voltaire greatly admired M. de Buffon, but he could not approve of poetical deſcriptions in a body of Natural Hiſtory, or allow that an account of the horſe or the aſs ſhould be written in the ſtyle of Telemachus. It might be urged, in anſwer, that M. de Buffon, naturally eloquent, followed his own genius, without any great regard to the ſcience on which he treated, and that we

eaſily pardon a writer for laviſhing ornaments on a ſubject which appears, in its own nature, dry and unintereſting.

Voltaire has been very ſevere on the French Opera, not becauſe he had not ſucceeded in that kind of writing, for he was very ſenſible of the merit of a good opera. No one has ſaid more in praiſe of Quinault, perhaps he has ſaid too much, but our lyric tragedy appeared to him a ſpecies of poem neceſſarily diſguſting by the continual repetition of common-place gallantry. Nothing is to be met with in them, ſaid he, (and as the author of *Le Double Veuvage*, *The Double Widowhood*, had ſaid before) but

> Flames and darts and pangs and hearts,
> Flowers and bowers, brooks, and crooks, and
> Groves and doves, and little loves.

It is to be remarked that Voltaire often repeated in his writings the bon mots of others. There is a pleaſantry of his upon a prelate, equally learned and virtuous, whoſe name alone would put him in a rage. "At Puy, ſays he, they enquired whether Monſeigneur had not printed ſomething at Paris, and at Paris they aſked,

aſked, whether he had not publiſhed ſomething at Puy." This thought is taken from the following epigram againſt the poet Roi:

While liſtening to Roi, tho' his rhimes are deſpis'd,
He makes fools imagine, they're ev'ry where priz'd;
In Paris they ſell at Verſailles, he declares,
In Verſailles, oh! that all Paris buys them he ſwears.

In general, thoſe who delight in either uttering or writing bon mots are greatly addicted to plagiariſm. When Voltaire was received into the academy, Piron, not being able to make way through the crowd, ſaid, "I find it is more difficult to get in here than to be admitted a member."

This had been before ſaid, by the Abbé Servien, as long ago as the year 1712, and is to be found in ſome ſatirical pieces at the end of the Neological Dictionary of the Abbé des Fontaines.

To return to the plagiariſms of Voltaire from celebrated authors; we ought not to forget the Perſian Letters of Monteſquieu, which have ſupplied him with many pleaſantries; and the Spirit of Laws, from which he has borrowed many thoughts.

The expreſſion in the *Ecoſſaiſe*, I will not ſay, but I will ſwear, is originally Piron's.

This Epigram

A ſerpent Freron bit, in ſpite;
Know you what follow'd from the bite?
Not, Sir, the latter, but the firſt,
Did, with increaſe of venom, burſt.

is only a parody of another written long before.

Voltaire well knew he was accuſed of borrowing from others, and defended himſelf with ſome degree of plauſibility.

" My rivals, ſays he, inceſſantly accuſe me " with pillaging both the ancients and moderns. " We both frequently treat on the ſame ſubject, " and we both pillage to adorn it; but from the " ſucceſs of their works, and of mine, it is mani- " faſt I am not the unpardonable thief."

Voltaire has likewiſe been reproached with criticiſing the authors, from whom he borrowed, with undeſerved ſeverity, and thus ſetting fire to the houſe he had plundered. Shakeſpeare has been mentioned as one inſtance. But he had beſtowed juſt praiſes on the Engliſh poet, and it muſt be confeſſed, that, in imitating him, he has corrected all his defects, and ſurpaſſed his beauties. " A literary thief, ſays a certain wit, ſhould always

always murder his man." This is preciſely what Voltaire has done by Shakeſpeare, in his tragedy of *La Mort de Céſar:* The Death of Cæſar*.

Several of the works of Voltaire have been tranſlated into almoſt all the languages of Europe. They have even penetrated into China. A learned Chineſe has tranſlated ſeveral poetical pieces of the French Homer. They are greatly admired, it is ſaid, by the reigning Emperor, Kien-Long, who has given Voltaire the title of *Pouſal-fond*, or the Supernatural Mind.

But this Supernatural Mind has been accuſed of ignorance by his critics. This accuſation is certainly unjuſt. Voltaire, indeed, had not the learning of Mabillon, or Du Cange; and may perhaps have made a few miſtakes in chronology or hiſtory: but, in general, he was well informed of his ſubject. He had ſome knowledge of every

* The paſſage is tranſlated with the contempt it deſerves, and is an additional proof, if any proof were wanting, that though Frenchmen have a thouſand ſhining qualities, a thouſand virtues, their ridiculous and extreme vanity overclouds and often totally obſcures them all. T.

Yet forgive me, God,
That I do brag thus—This your air of France
Hath blown that vice in me.

SHAKESPEARE'S Hen V.

ſcience,

ſcience, and had ſtudied ſeveral with great attention. The Abbé Trublet, who knew him well, has cited him as a proof, that talents may be improved by learning. "There is nothing, ſays he, which he does not know, and thoſe literati who have been moſt familiar with him, corroborate this teſtimony, though many of the learned treat him as ſuperficial in thoſe ſciences which they have made the particular objects of their ſtudy.

As to languages, he underſtood Latin, Engliſh, and Italian. He knew but little of Greek, nothing of Hebrew, and was but moderately acquainted with the Spaniſh. French, however, he underſtood perfectly, and was a maſter of all its niceties, as ſufficiently appeared by his converſation and writings. He had likewiſe beſtowed conſiderable attention on etymology, being well convinced, that this ſpecies of learning, when neither arbitrary nor chimerical, is highly neceſſary to an accurate knowledge and proper uſe of words.

As a ſpecimen of the converſation of Voltaire, we ſhall add the following Dialogues:

A Converſation between M. DE VOLTAIRE and two Travellers from Avignon.

VISITORS.

We were unwilling to paſs through Geneva without ſeeing the wonder of the age.

VOLTAIRE.

You are very polite. I am only a ſick old man. May I aſk you, gentlemen, if you have travelled far?

VISITORS.

We are from Avignon.

VOLTAIRE.

You are leaving then the papal territories for an heretical country—and what will the inquiſition ſay?

VISITORS.

Our inquiſition is very mild, it hurts nobody.

VOLTAIRE.

It is pity but it would hurt ſome of your printers, who fill all Europe with rhapſodies and ſatires.

VISITORS.

Theſe works are not known at Avignon; they are printed by ſtealth, and circulated in the ſame manner.

VOLTAIRE.

You have in your city a very amiable man of learning; I mean the Marquis of Caumont. I have alſo had ſome acquaintance with the Abbé de Sade. Is he not publiſhing the Memoirs of Petrarch?

VISI-

VISITORS.

Yes; the firſt volume has already appeared, in quarto, and will be followed by two others.

VOLTAIRE.

Three volumes, in quarto, on one man! It is too much.

VISITORS.

But he has inſerted part of the poetry of Petrarch, which he has tranſlated into French verſe.

VOLTAIRE.

I would not admiſe him to tranſlate it all. A repetition of the ſame ideas and the ſame ſentiments would not greatly pleaſe our French readers. We are, beſides, ſo rich in theſe kind of compoſitions, that we have no need of ſupplies from a foreign language. I doubt, much, whether Petrarch, though a very great man, in the age in which he lived, were equal to our Racine, or even Quinault. However, if he were as ingenious, he certainly was not ſo natural. I have formerly attempted to tranſlate ſeveral of his pieces, but I ſoon perceived he had often more imagination than taſte, and more wit than pathos. Whoever tranſlates Petrarch ought to make a ſelection.

VISITORS.

It is probable the Abbé de Sade will make ſuch a ſelection.

VOLTAIRE.

You have many Jeſuits in your country, have you not?

VISITORS.

There are ſome

VOLTAIRE.

Thoſe gentlemen ought not to take advantage of their aſylum, to publiſh all manner of abuſe againſt perſons of merit, whom they ought to reſpect.

VISITORS.

Thoſe of whom we have any knowledge are, for the moſt part, peaceable old men; we do not know that they have written againſt any one. Perhaps the preſſes of Avignon are blamed for what is in reality publiſhed at Liege or Bruſſels, &c.

Another

Another Converſation * between M. DE VOLTAIRE and a Workman of the County of Neufchatel.

VOLTAIRE.

Is it true that you come from Neufchatel?

WORKMAN.

Yes, Sir.

VOLTAIRE.

Are you from the town of Neufchatel itſelf?

WORKMAN.

No, Sir. I come from the village of Butte, in the valley of Travers.

VOLTAIRE.

Butte! Is that far from Motiers?

WORKMAN.

About a ſhort league.

VOLTAIRE.

There is a certain perſon in your country who has been guilty of a great number of abſurdities.

* This converſation is taken from the letters of J. J. Rouſſeau, to whom it was related by M. de Montmollin, who had it from the workman himſelf.

WORKMAN.

Whom do you mean, Sir?

VOLTAIRE.

One Jean Jacques Rouſſeau. Do you know him?

WORKMAN.

Yes, Sir. I ſaw him once, at Butte, in the coach of M. de Montmollin, who was taking an airing with him.

VOLTAIRE.

What! Does that fellow ride in a coach? He is become very proud, ſure.

WORRMAN.

He walks too ſometimes, and climbs up our mountains like a cat.

VOLTAIRE.

He will climb up a ladder one day or other. He was very near being hanged at Paris, and will, yet, if ever he returns thither.

WORKMAN.

Hanged! Sir. He has all the appearance of an honeſt man. Good God! What has he done?

VOLTAIRE.

He has written abominable books. He is a very wicked wretch; an atheiſt.

WORKMAN.

You ſurprize me! Why, he goes every Sunday to church.

VOLTAIRE.

What a hypocrite! Well, and what do they ſay of him in your country? Does any body deſire to ſee him.

WORKMAN.

Every body, Sir. Every body loves him. His company is ſought after every where. He is particularly a favorite with my Lord. *

VOLTAIRE.

His Lordſhip does not know him; nor do you. Only wait two or three months, and you will ſee what he is. The people of Montmorenci, where he lives, made bonfires when they found he had eſcaped the gallows. He is a man without faith, honor or religion. (**)

WORKMAN.

* Lord Keith, Governor of Neufchatel.

(**) Voltaire certainly ſpoke of J. J. Rouſſeau with great aſperity: he was one of thoſe perſons the mention of whoſe very name was ſufficient to put him out of humour. Yet he often pretended to wiſh a reconciliation with him; but Rouſſeau did not believe him ſincere. "He has had a long converſation, ſays he, with Monſieur "* * *, he has played his part admirably: he is no ſtranger to the "requiſites neceſſary for a great actor. *Dolis inſtructus et arte Pelaſgâ.*"

WORKMAN.

Without religion, Sir! It has been ſaid, you have not much of that yourſelf.

VOLTAIRE.

No! Gracious God! Who can ſay ſuch a thing?

WORKMAN.

All the world, Sir.

VOLTAIRE.

O what horrible ſlander! Have I not ſtudied among the Jeſuits, and diſcourſed concerning God, better than the whole body of divines?

WORKMAN.

But it is ſaid, Sir, you have written very wicked books.

VOLTAIRE.

It is falſe. Let them produce a ſingle book which bears my name, as thoſe of that beggar bear his, &c. &c.

Pelaſgâ." Voltaire indeed was aſhamed of the name of perſecutor, given him by Rouſſeau and his partiſans, and, perhaps, on that account, really deſired a reconciliation; but Jean Jacques was too ſuſpicious, and could not eaſily appear friendly with thoſe from whom his heart was eſtranged. He could not, he ſaid, promiſe an eſteem which did not depend on himſelf. Indeed, what purpoſe could any reconciliation anſwer, when the contending parties could neither love nor reſpect each other.

AN

ABSTRACT,

HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL,

OF THE

THEATRICAL WORKS

OF

M. DE VOLTAIRE.

I. OEDIPE, the firſt attempt of M. de Voltaire, was likewiſe his maſter-piece, at leaſt for the verſification. This piece, acted in 1718, has undergone frequent criticiſms, which in general have been well-founded. We ſhall quote what M. de Voltaire has himſelf ſaid.

" The grand defect is the ſubject. The tra-
" gedy of Oedipus ought regularly to end with
" the firſt act. It is not natural to ſuppoſe Oedi-
" pus ignorant of the circumſtances attending his
" predeceſſor's death. Sophocles took no pains
" to correct this fault; and Corneille, by endea-
" voring to avoid it, has done ſtill worſe; nor
" have I ſucceeded better than theſe great men.

" My

" My piece has alſo a more conſiderable defect,
" which does not reſult from the ſubject, and for
" which I am alone reſponſible; I mean the cha-
" racter of Philoctetes. He ſeems to have come
" to Thebes merely to be accuſed, though there
" is, perhaps, but little reaſon for any accu-
" ſation. He arrives in the firſt act, and goes
" back in the third. He is only to be found in
" the three firſt acts, and is not ſo much as men-
" tioned in the laſt. He contributes but little to
" the plot, and the cataſtrophe is effected abſo-
" lutely without his aid. Thus the piece ap-
" pears compoſed of two tragedies, one of which
" has for its ſubject Philoctetes, and the other
" Oedipus.

" I have been ſolicitous to give Philoctetes
" the character of a hero; but am fearful what I
" intended for greatneſs of ſoul may appear ridi-
" culous boaſting. Happily, I have read, in
" Madam Dacier, that it is allowable for a man
" to ſpeak well of himſelf, when he is calum-
" niated: now this is preciſely the caſe of Phi-
" loctetes. He is reduced, by ſlanderous accu-
" ſations, to the neceſſity of commending him-
" ſelf. In any other ſituation I ſhould have given
" him more politeneſs than pride, and were he
" deſcribed in like circumſtances with Sertorius
" and Pompey, I ſhould have taken the conver-

" ſation

" ſation of thoſe two great men as my model:
" however I might have deſpaired to attain its
" excellence.

" With reſpect to the amour between Jocaſta
" and Philoctetes, I may boldly affirm it is a de-
" fect abſolutely neceſſary. The ſubject, in itſelf,
" furniſhed nothing ſufficient to fill the three firſt
" acts. Thoſe who are acquainted with theatrical
" compoſitions, and are as well aware of their
" difficulty as ſenſible of ſuch errors, will be per-
" fectly of my opinion. The principal cha-
" racters muſt always be agitated by ſome paſ-
" ſions, and how inſipid had been the part of Jo-
" caſta had ſhe not at leaſt preſerved the remem-
" brance of a legitimate love, and had ſhe not
" been diſtreſſed with fears for the life of a man
" who had formerly been the object of her af-
" fections!

" I confeſs I have been ſhewn ſeveral verſes,
" in my piece, which are to be found in other
" dramatic productions. I ſay, I have been
" ſhewn; for whether, having my memory filled
" with the verſes of other writers, I imagined
" what occurred to be the fruit of my own in-
" vention, or whether the ſame thoughts and
" turns of expreſſion may ſometimes preſent them-
" ſelves to different perſons, it is certain I have

" been a plagiariſt without my knowledge, and " that except thoſe beautiful lines of Corneille,

Ce monſtre à voix humaine, &c.

" And that other paſſage,

Et le ſort qui l'accable, &c.

" I have not deſignedly borrowed from any one. " In Corneille's *Horace* is the following verſe,

Eſt ce vous Curiace ? en croirai je mes yeux.

" In my piece there is,

Eſt ce vous Philoctete ? en croirai je mes yeux.

" I hope every one will do me the honor to " believe me capable of writing a line equally " good; however I have altered it, and cannot " but wiſh all my errors had been as eaſy to " correct."

La Motte, by his office was cenſor of this piece, and he has expreſſed himſelf thus, " The public, " during its repreſentation, believed a worthy " ſucceſſor of Corneille and Racine had ariſen; " nor will their hopes be diſappointed by its ap- " pearance in print."

II. OEDIPE was performed more than forty times, in oppoſition to a ſwarm of critics; but

ARTE-

ARTEMIRE, a tragedy acted in 1720, had no ſucceſs. It was never printed; we muſt therefore paſs over in ſilence both its beauties and defects. It is ſaid to have contained many excellent verſes; but the conduct of the piece was, undoubtedly, not equal to the verſification.

III. HERODE ET MARIAMNE, acted in 1723. had, originally, no more ſucceſs than Artemire. The firſt repreſentation was not even permitted to be finiſhed, through a whimſical criticiſm of the pit, who were offended at the Queen's drinking on the ſtage *. The following year the Queen did not drink, and the piece was acted forty times. "The French people (ſaid the Abbé de la Porte) "delight in extremes; for, to confeſs the truth, "this tragedy neither deſerved its former diſgrace, "nor its ſubſequent ſucceſs."

The choice of the ſubject was greatly blamed, The petit-maitres alledged it was only an old, brutal, and amorous huſband, whoſe wife refuſed to comply with conjugal duty; and they added,

* Its failure has been alſo attributed to a bon mot. A comedy, called *Le Deuil* (The Mourning) was acted as an after-piece. A wit cried out, "It was the mourning for the new piece;" and even this contributed not a little to diſpoſe the audience to receive the tragedy unfavorably.

a family quarrel was not a proper theme for a tragedy. But this quarrel has been enobled by the brilliant pencil of the author; and, perhaps, this brilliance is even ſometimes too exceſſive. We do not find in Mariamne the ſweet and tender ſtyle of Zaïre, and it contains too many epic verſes. It is no wonder the ſubject ſhould excite the genius of M. de Voltaire to undertake its embelliſhment. A King who has been univerſally honored with the title of the Great, paſſionately fond of the moſt beautiful woman in the world; the frantic paſſion of a monarch ſo famous for his virtues and his crimes, his paſt cruelties and preſent remorſe; that continual and rapid tranſition from love to hatred, and hatred to love; the ambition of his ſiſter; the intrigues of his miniſters; the cruel ſituation of a Princeſs, whoſe virtue and beauty are ſtill celebrated through the world, who had ſeen her father and brother put to death by her huſband, and who, ſtill more to heighten her calamities, ſaw herſelf paſſionately loved by the murderer of her neareſt relations! What a field is here for ſuch an imagination as M. de Voltaire's! But is muſt be acknowledged alſo, that this vaſt field affords ſeveral tender ſituations, which rather require the pencil of Paul Veroneſe than that of Michael Angelo.

IV. L'INDISCRET, a comedy, acted in 1725, was the firſt dramatic work, of the comic kind, produced by M. de Voltaire. This piece is written with great propriety and art, and in the true ſtyle of good comedy. It contains character, ludicrous ſituation, and ſprightly dialogue. It is no leſs correct than elegant, though the language may, perhaps, not be eſteemed ſufficiently flowing.

V. M. de Voltaire remained five years after the appearance of this piece, without producing any thing for the theatre. The ſtudy of the Engliſh Language, his Travels in England, his Hiſtory of Charles XII. and his Miſcellanies engaged his whole attention, during that interval. At length his BRUTUS came forth; this tragedy was performed, for the firſt time, in 1730. It had no ſucceſs in France; but was better received by foreigners, than any other of his pieces.

Its defects, it muſt be confeſſed, are conſiderable; but it muſt alſo be allowed, it is, in many reſpects, a work worthy of its author, and the admiration of poſterity. Many dramatic pieces have had great ſucceſs in the repreſentation, tho' it is impoſſible to read them with patience; but of this the reverſe is true. Though it pleaſed but little on the ſtage, it was much more admired in the cloſet; "A proof (ſays the Abbé des Fontaines)

taines) that it poſſeſſes merit and beauties, which charm more forcibly the more they are examined."

The pencil of Corneille is apparent in many places. The verſification is worthy the genius of its author; and, except in a few inſtances, where it ſeems to have been leſs attended to, the more it is read the more it pleaſes. What thoughts! what images! what ſentiments! what harmony! The part of Tullia has been thought unintereſting, and with reaſon; but this is leſs the fault of the author than the audience. We are accuſtomed to conſider the paſſion of love as the ſoul of tragedy; and continually expect the ideas and intrigues of romance. Every female character, if not conformable to this prejudice, appears to us inſipid.

VI. ERIPHILE, a tragedy, acted two years after Brutus, but never printed till 1779, was entirely unſucceſsful, and deſerved its diſgrace. The plot was intitled to no praiſe; its brilliant and pompous language was therefore diſregarded. Nothing was noticed but the want of connexion in its parts, and propriety in its characters. The marvellous incident of the ghoſt diſguſted the audience, who were not to be appeaſed by a few detached beauties.

VII

VII. M. de Voltaire had already emulated Corneille, and in 1732, he became the ſucceſsful rival of Racine, by producing his ZAÏRE. This was the firſt dramatic piece in which he gave full liberty to the ſenſibility of his heart. He had formed the idea of oppoſing to each other, in the ſame work, on one ſide, honor, high birth, the love of our country, and religion; and, on the other, a paſſion the moſt tender and unfortunate; to contraſt the manners of the Mahometans and thoſe of the Chriſtians; the court of a Sultan and that of a King of France, and to make the French nation enter, for the firſt time, into the tragic ſcene. This project was truly great, and the author executed it in eighteen days. But a work ſo haſtily conceived, and rapidly executed, could not be without faults; they were ſoon remarked by the critics.

> With many a ſneer they oft repeated,
> That I, from fancy over heated,
> All rule and reaſon far aſtray,
> Had forg'd a novel, not a play;
> Had maim'd the tale, nor ſhewn, at laſt,
> How theſe ſtrange incidents had paſt.
>
> EPI. TO ZAÏRE.

It was remarked that Oroſmanes was rather a French courtier than a Turkiſh Sultan: that it was

was not probable a Turk ſhould ſo govern his paſſion for a ſlave till after the marriage ceremony: that Zaïre was not ſufficiently a Chriſtian; that ſhe reaſoned very indifferently on the ſubject of religion: that ſhe was undetermined even in death; and that it could not be known whether ſhe died in the belief of Chriſtianity, or in a total indifference for every religion; that the letter, which proved her deſtruction, was a frivolous invention, &c. Yet though it was criticiſed without remiſſion, the applauſe it received was unbounded. What a beautiful ſcene is that between Luſignan and his children! Racine himſelf has written no tragedy more affecting: no piece ever drew more tears from the audience; and, though the language may ſometimes appear leſs carefully ſtudied, it far more frequently exhibits that elegant delicacy which is the indiſputable mark of true genius.

The author labored inceſſantly to correct it during its firſt run, but ſuch alterations are not very agreeable to the actors. The celebrated Dufreſne, weary of receiving every day new corrections, ordered that no meſſage from M. de Voltaire ſhould be admitted. The poet, however, contrived to tranſmit him his alterations by a very ſingular ſtratagem. He knew that Dufreſne intended to give a grand dinner to his friends, and cauſed a partridge pie to be made, which he

ſent

ſent to the actor, ſtrictly charging the perſon who carried it not to ſay from whom it came. The pie was preſently opened; but how great was the ſurprize of the gueſts to find in it twelve partridges, each holding in its beak ſeveral little notes, containing the additions, retrenchments and alterations he had made in the part of Dufreſne. It was eaſy to know from whom the preſent came, and every one warmly praiſed this ingenious and delicate method of rendering the corrections of an author acceptable to the actor.

VIII. ALZIRE, the younger ſiſter of Zaïre, appeared in 1736, and received equal applauſe. It exhibits the ſublimity and noble independence of a ſoul uncorrupted by art; ſtill more tender even than Zaïre, it affects every heart that poſſeſſes the leaſt ſenſibility.

The ſucceſs of this piece could not ſilence the critics. It is not without defects, though its beauties ought to prevent their being mentioned. This tragedy occaſioned the following excellent verſes by Greſſet.

Beauty, moſt faultleſs, ſtill, hath faults ſome few;
Thrice have I ſeen Alzire, thrice charm'd anew,
Have heard her caſual blemiſhes decried;
But tears can better, ſure, than rules decide:
And, tho' ſhe may receive a frown from art,
She gains th' unbounded plaudits of the heart.

Good

Good taſte, devoid of rule, walks ſelf-erect;
Where moſt is feeling, there is leaſt defect.
Nor is it chance that thus the ſoul can heat:
When Nature's fountains flow, there's no deceit.
Then ſnarl who will, I feel theſe pure delights,
When charming Gauſſin acts what Voltaire writes.

Some envious perſons having circulated a report that *Alzire* was not the work of M. de Voltaire, "I could wiſh it were not with all my heart," ſaid an officer preſent. Being aſked his reaſon, "Becauſe, added he, we ſhould then have gained another poet." Indeed the genius of the truly great poet is very apparent in *Alzire*, in the ſublimity and harmony of its verſification, in its nervous and tender ſentiments, in the probability and intereſt given to a ſubject ſo oppoſite to our manners, and the propriety with which characters ſo ſingular and extraordinary are ſupported.

IX. L'Enfant Prodigue. This comedy, acted the ſame year as Alzire, and with nearly the ſame ſucceſs, proves M. de Voltaire to be equally capable of brandiſhing the terrific dagger, or waving the ſportive maſk. Though it contains many exceptionable paſſages, it well deſerved all the applauſe it received. The ſingular ſtyle of this work, reſembling no other of the kind, and the

the peculiar meaſure of its verſe *, which was new to the French theatre, contributed to attract large audiences. It is calculated to draw tears no leſs than to excite laughter, thought it does not too much abound in what has been called *Le Comique Larmoyant*, nor has it abſolutely forſaken the character of good comedy.

This comedy was not at firſt acknowledged by M. de Voltaire. " *L'Enfant Prodigue*, ſays he, in a letter about that time, is an orphan of which I do not avow myſelf the father." Opinions were divided with regard to the author. " As for me, " ſaid the Abbé des Fontaines, I was not in doubt " a moment; but, without pretending to pene- " trate the myſtery, I ſhall only ſay, that a great " poet may, ſometimes, write beneath himſelf, " and produce things mean and trivial; that " he may offer to the ſtage inſipidities, which he " approved in his cloſet, and flat witticiſms, " which can only be pleaſing to his own heated " imagination. But in the midſt of all theſe de- " fects, which are principally noticed by little " critics, extraordinary genius ſhines forth. The " ſingular abilities of the concealed author are " eaſily diſcovered, by the eaſe of his ſtyle, his " agreeable dialogue, the delicacy of his turns,

* It is written in verſe of ten ſyllables.

" and

" and the characteriſtic elegance of a great num-
" ber of lines, which are manifeſtly by the hand of
" a maſter. There are, in the fourth and fifth acts,
" ſeveral affecting and well finiſhed ſcenes, which
" clearly prove the pathetic to be particularly
" ſuited to the genius of the writer."

X. In theatrical productions, the moſt brilliant ſucceſs is ſometimes only the forerunner of ill fortune. This was verified by M. de Voltaire, when his ZULIME was acted, in 1740. The three firſt acts were much applauded; but the two laſt were ſo ill received that it was not thought adviſeable to act it a ſecond time. The author himſelf confeſſed it was inferior to his other tragedies. " It was, he ſaid, a ſummer ſhower." It was revived in 1762, and with ſome ſucceſs, notwithſtanding the faults with which it abounds.

" The ſubject of the tragedy, ſays M. Rouſſeau de Toulouſe, is intereſting, but the incidents are not ſufficiently explained, connected, or probable. The arrival of Benaſſer is too ſudden; his entry into the city, Arzenia, too eaſily effected; the combats are too quick and too confuſed; the victory of *Alide*, who, by his courage, aſtoniſhes the ſoldiers, and gains *Ramire*, borders too much on the marvellous. It were to be wiſhed there had been more probability in the ſudden change

of

of *Zulime*, who, after having diſtinctly perceived the underſtanding between the two lovers, unaccountably ſhuts her eyes to the light, and blindly confides in thoſe who have betrayed her. Her forſaking the religion of her fathers ſeems without ſufficient motive. The ſubject, in fact, admits of no denouement, and the two which have been tried are neither of them ſatisfactory."

Beſides, as the author himſelf has remarked, the defects of the character of Ramire have influenced the whole piece. A hero, who has no other part but that of a lover, will never greatly intereſt the audience. He is no longer a character proper for tragedy.

We muſt therefore confeſs the ſubject defective: yet this ill-fabricated canvaſs Voltaire has frequently embelliſhed with the moſt brilliant colouring. What fire, what pathos in the part of Zulime! How affecting is Alide! How generous Ramire! What tenderneſs, truth, and elevation in the character of Benaſſar! The ſimplicity of the piece is another ſubject for panegyric. It contains neither epiſode nor foreign incident; every thing ariſes naturally from the characters introduced in the firſt act.

XI. La Mort de Cesar, a tragedy, in three acts, performed in 1742, is very different from the

the preceding. Zulima contains nothing but love: in the Death of Cæſar there is neither female nor tender paſſion. All the characters converſe with a familiar equality. Such is the behaviour of Brutus to Cæſar, though he ſtyles him his father, and though he has reſolved to aſſaſſinate him. The ſentiments of Brutus are more extravagant than heroic. This piece, in its plan, dialogue, conduct, ſtyle and ſentiments, is entirely in the taſte of the Engliſh ſtage. It may inſpire a noble zeal for liberty and our country, in a generous and well cultivated mind; but, in another point of view, it may be prejudicial, by exhibiting an example of ferocious and unnatural courage.

Almoſt every line of this work bears the marks of the great genius; many are extremely beautiful, and many of the thoughts forcible, manly and new. The ſcene of the conſpirators is one of the moſt nervous to be found on the ſtage. Some paſſages are written with an eloquence truly ſublime; but to taſte their beauties requires a Roman audience, and not an aſſembly of the effeminate *petit maitres* of Paris.

XII. Le Fanatisme, or Mahomet the Prophet. In this piece, brought on the ſtage in 1742, M. de Voltaire appeared the ſucceſsful rival of Crebillon, as in his Brutus he had vied with Corneille,

neille, and in his Zaïre with Racine. Mahomet is allowed, by the beſt judges, to be an admirable compoſition, both for eloquence and poetry. The madneſs of fanaticiſm, and the ungovernable tranſports of ambition and revenge were, perhaps, never imagined with greater force. But this piece requires actors, and an audience, worthy its excellence.

If, in the fourth act, we could find performers capable of all the emotions and agitation of violent paſſion; a *Seide*, who ſhould at once be actuated by enthuſiaſm and tenderneſs, brutal thro' fanaticiſm, but naturally humane and capable at once to rage and weep; a *Palmire*, animated, tender, terrified and trembling at the crime ſhe is about to commit, and ſeized with horror, repentance and deſpair at the inſtant that crime is perpetrated; a father, whoſe feeling voice and manner might prove him truly a father, who ſhould recognize his two children in his murderers, and embrace them, mingling his tears with theirs, and with his own blood, who might raiſe himſelf to claſp them in his arms and ſink again ſupported by them; could we find actors to expreſs ſuch ſituations and emotions, with ſuitable energy, theſe ſcenes would be ſuperior to any thing we have ever ſeen.

XIII. Though the ſucceſs of Mahomet was ſomewhat equivocal, that of MEROPE, acted in 1743, was exceedingly brilliant. This piece is ſuperior to the *Andromaque* of Racine. We can never ſufficiently admire the infinite art with which M. de Voltaire has ſo much intereſted us, by a piece in which no mutual paſſion is diſplayed, and where all the ſentiments and ſituations turn on the tender affection of a mother for her child; whereas, in the *Andromaque*, the love of Oreſtes for Hermione, which is perhaps too much in the nature of an epiſode, produces almoſt all the intereſt of the piece.

We can never too often remind our young poets, who are too apt to be infatuated with romantic incidents, that Merope has only been ſo much applauded, becauſe it is Natute herſelf, and that, if this tragedy had a fifth act, it would be the firſt of dramatic models. What a picture of maternal tenderneſs! What mother was ever actuated by feelings more forcible! How is ſhe alarmed for the life of *Egiſte!* How tranſported with joy when ſhe ſees him again! How fearful of loſing him! and how anxious to re-eſtabliſh him on the throne of the Heraclidæ, his anceſtors.

The part of Merope was the triumph of Mademoiſelle du Meſnil. What acclamations of tenderneſs and admiration did ſhe not extort, when,

with

with diſtraction in her eyes and ſuffocation in her voice, ſhe lifted her trembling hand to ſacrifice her own ſon; when Narbas prevented the blow, and, dropping her poniard, ſhe fainted in the arms of her attendants; when ſhe recovered from her trance, and, ruſhing towards *Polifonte*, croſſed the ſtage, in an inſtant, and, weeping, pale, and frantic, ſtretched forth her arms, crying out, "Barbarian, he is my ſon!"

This tragedy pleaſed far more on the ſtage than in the peruſal. On which account M. de Fontenelle ſaid, with equal ingenuity and delicacy, "The repreſentations of Merope have done great "honor to M. de Voltaire, and the printed copies "to Mademoiſelle du Meſnil." The ſtyle was cenſured as not ſufficiently poliſhed. "This "piece, ſaid the Abbé des Fontaines, certainly "contains many harmonious lines, but many "do not riſe above, and many are even below, "mediocrity. M. de Voltaire in all his works "reſembles Tintoret, the famous painter of the "Venetian ſchool, of whom the Italians ſaid, "That he had three pencils, one of gold, one "of ſilver, and the other of iron. The Henriade "is the work of all theſe three. Oedipus is the "only piece in which the golden one has been "employed alone. M. de Voltaire, when he "wrote that, could write no verſes but what were

" good; yet, in whatever he produces, the man " of genius and the great writer are very appa- " rent; becauſe he poſſeſſes the art of being elo- " quent in verſe: an art extremely difficult and " equally rare."

M. de Voltaire has alſo been cenſured for having formed his Merope on the tragedy of Maffei; but this reproach is unjuſt, becauſe the imitation of the French author may be very reaſonably conſidered as invention. It cannot be denied but the Italian tragedy required great correction, to be rendered even ſupportable; and it is much to the credit of the underſtanding of the French imitator, that, diſdaining to copy the firſt act, which in the Italian is perfectly ridiculous, he has only followed the other four, in which he has made great alterations. If M. de Voltaire cannot claim the glory of invention in this piece, neither does it belong to M. Maffei, ſince, prior to his tragedy, there exiſted two or three *Teleſphontes* and one *Amaſis*. To be able to bring the works of others to perfection is always juſtly deſerving praiſe, and eſpecially when we are ourſelves capable of original invention.

XIV. La Princesse de Navarre, a ballet comedy, was repreſented at Verſailles in 1745. The King being deſirous to give an entertainment

to

to the Dauphineſs, which ſhould not merely be addreſſed to the eye, M. de Voltaire was appointed to compoſe a drama for the occaſion, and produced a ſpecies of compoſition in which the muſic makes a principal part. The heroic ſtyle is intermingled with pleaſantry, and the whole is a mixture of opera, comedy and tragedy. Such is the Princeſſe de Navarre. This whimſical and romantic piece was ſeverely criticiſed, with reſpect to the matter and the form. We do not mean to write its apology, but, as it abounds with action, it was, perhaps, on that account, highly proper for the purpoſe for which it was intended. Marechal Richelieu, who equally cultivated and patronized the fine arts, cauſed the Princeſſe de Navarre to be again performed at Bourdeaux, about twenty years ago, where it was then received very favorably.

XV. SEMIRAMIS was compoſed, as well as the Princeſſe de Navarre, for the entertainment of the Infanta of Spain, Dauphineſs of France, but it was not acted till 1748. This piece required great magnificence of dreſs, and ſuperb ſcenery; and the King was willing to be at the expence, out of reſpect to the Princeſs, by whom it had been required. M. de Crebillon had before written a tragedy with the ſame title, but it was unſucceſs-

ful. M. de Voltaire's was ſtill more ſo. The contrivance is nearly alike in both. They contain the ſame characters, except the ghoſt of Ninus, which has been greatly ridiculed; but, if it really contributes to the intereſt of the piece, the ridicule is miſplaced. The part of Semiramis, tho' not very intereſting, is ſublime; but the three firſt acts do not ſpeak ſufficiently to the heart; and, though the fourth has more feeling, the fifth is at once deſtitute of warmth and probability. We too ſoon perceive how the whole muſt conclude. At the beginning of the ſecond ſcene the whole plot is brought up in a box, in which is childiſhly diſplayed the ſeal, ſword, royal diadem, and a letter of Ninus. The intrigue lies all in that box, which is no ſooner opened than we read, in the letter, that Arſaces is Ninias, and, on the hilt of the ſword, that he is to employ it to revenge the death of his father.

Notwithſtanding theſe defects, and others, which an intelligent reader cannot fail to diſcern, this tragedy contains many beauties. The fourth act appears to deſerve great praiſe. The diſcovery of the mother and the ſon is conducted with all that ſtrength, fire, and ſuperiority of pathos, for which M. de Voltaire is ſo diſtinguiſhed. The three firſt acts are cold, indeed, but the objects they exhibit are grand, and their coloring magnificent.

nificent. The piece is written throughout with much elevation, the verſification is brilliant, rarely negligent, and full of that harmony, that richneſs of expreſſion, and true poetical charm, which enchants the underſtanding and the ear.

This tragedy, however, was by no means well received, at the firſt repreſentation. The author, meeting Piron behind the ſcenes, aſked him, "What he thought of it?" "I think, replied Piron, you would have been very glad if I had written it." Piron did not content himſelf with this bon mot; he wrote a burleſque ſong, in which he comprized a variety of the objectionable particulars in the piece.

New blaſphemies, fanatic fears,
Kings, Commons, and Peers;
Aſſes ears.
Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!
What ſhall you not ſee in this new raree-ſhew?

A caſket! a dream! a toledo moſt glum!
A letter! a fooliſh prediction!
A coronet! a watchbox! a palace! a tomb!
A miracle! tho' but in fiction.
New blaſphemies, &c.

A legion of devils! with antics and freaks!
Over head thunder rumbling,
Under foot ghoſts a grumbling,
With flaſhes of light'ning, and phantoms, and ſhrieks,

Of

Of poiſon! ah! treaſon! oh! murder! where? here!
Help! inceſt! guards! daggers! death! mercy! oh dear!
New blaſphemies, &c.

The inſects of the pit followed the example of M. Piron. Every different ſpecies of criticiſm, both in verſe and proſe, was levelled againſt Semiramis. Parodies, ſongs, epigrams, obſervations, judgments, reflections, remarks, letters, parallels, were all employed to entomb her and Ninus together. Some pretended this would alſo prove the grave of Voltaire, but he afterwards gave ſufficient proofs he was ſtill alive.

XVI. ORESTE, acted in 1750, was almoſt as much criticiſed as Semiramis, and, though it deſerved it more, M. de Voltaire, when he publiſhed his piece, indulged his reſentment in ſome reflexions on the ſubject. "Since the obſervations "of the academy on the *Cid*, ſaid he, not a ſin-"gle dramatic production has appeared which "has not been criticiſed, nor a ſingle one which "has been criticiſed with judgment." This will not be believed by every one, but Voltaire may be excuſed for ſpeaking thus after the equivocal ſucceſs of his Oreſte. The author attributed this reverſe of fortune to a powerful party, which had been formed againſt him, though no great poet was ever known to have had a greater number

ber of zealous partizans. He afterwards threw the blame on Sophocles, who had ſerved him for a model: he ſaid, to one of his friends, when he gave him a copy, "I make you no great preſent, it is the work of Sophocles." "M. de Voltaire might have added, ſays M. Daquin, for the honor of the Grecian poet and of truth, I preſent you with Sophocles diſguiſed and enfeebled."

The pleaſure of ſurprize is wanting; the two laſt acts are lanquid, tumid in diction and feeble in action, conduct and probability. To add to theſe defects, that poetic fire, which had rendered ſo many little errors in Semiramis pardonable, was no longer to be found; and inſtead of marks of genius, it abounded with verboſe declamation and redundancies. Yet there are ſeveral beautiful ſcenes in this piece, which M. de Voltaire has ſince purified from the faults with which it was disfigured. The interrogatories put to Oreſtes, who comes to announce his own death to Clytemneſtra and the tyrant, and eſpecially that moment when the diſtraction of Oreſtes, ſpeaking to his mother, brings him to the point of betraying himſelf, keep the audience in the greateſt agitation. The ſuppoſition of the aſhes of the ſon of Egiſtus, in the funeral urn, inſtead of thoſe of Oreſtes, which it was ſaid to contain, is alſo a very happy idea.

XVII.

XVII. Rome Sauvee, a tragedy, acted in 1752, almoſt entirely eclipſed the *Catilina* of M. de Crebillon, at leaſt for the elegance of its ſtyle. The part of Cicero was univerſally applauded, that of Catiline is entirely ſacrificed to it; but very beautiful lines are to be found in both. M. de Voltaire has highly embelliſhed the character of Cicero: he has rendered his vanity more noble, his eloquence more pure, and attributed to him a generoſity and firmneſs of ſoul of which he was not poſſeſſed.

" The glow of particular paſſages is ſo great, " ſays M. Clement in his Letters, that I entirely " forget in what manner they are connected, and " indeed I know not whether a piece more regu- " larly and artificially conducted, with reſpect to " its intereſt, could have given me ſo much plea- " ſure. For after all, what great intereſt can we " take in the ſafety of Rome? Is it becauſe it was " a republic? This idea is vague indeed! The " heart knows only individuals. Oh! but our " country. Our country is a fine word, and is " certainly not without ſome meaning.

" But, unfortunately, the minds of nine-tenths " of an audience are more conformable to Epi- " curean principles. Among all the theatrical " pieces, the plots of which are founded on a con- " ſpiracy, there is, perhaps, not one in which we

are

" are affected by the danger of the ſtate, but by " ſome particular characters, which we are artfully " induced to conſider as lovely or odious."

While the enchanting poetry of M. de Voltaire has been admired, the plan of his piece has been cenſured. This has happened to almoſt all his tragedies. But theſe ſlight defects of intrigue are overlooked by the audience, eſpecially when they are recompenſed by great and ſhining paſſages; and ſuch are undoubtedly to be found in Rome Sauvée. The ſecond act is very fine, and the conſpiracy is conducted in it with great ſtrength and propriety; but the third does not ſupport the dignity of the ſecond. The character of Catiline ſinks inſenſibly, and is poor and barren, when oppoſed to Cicero, who is the hero of the piece. It were to be wiſhed, likewiſe, there were a little more of that gloomy horror, of which ſome ſlight traces are to be found in his Mahomet. But to inſpire this paſſion was not the principal excellence of our great poet; and he was either unable or unwilling to force his genius.

XVIII. Le Duc de Foix, which was repreſented in 1753, was not a new piece. It had appeared before, in 1734, under the title of *Adelaide du Gueſclin*. Men of taſte read this performance with

with pleaſure, not as a good tragedy, but as an inſtructive picture of the extravagance of the paſſions, and that torrent by which even the moſt virtuous are ſometimes carried away. The firſt act is a little cold, and does not ſufficiently abound with dramatic incident; either through the fault of the ſubject, or the inadvertence of the author, who might eaſily have remedied this defect, by retouching the opening ſcene, and altering that in which the extraction and family of Amelia is mentioned. The ſecond act is ſo abundant in beauties that it has but one fault, which is, that it is too ſhort. The intereſt of the piece is here extremely heightened, and rendered perfect in the third, by the taking and diſcovery of *Vamir*. The ſituation of the ſuffering characters, is ſo well managed, in the fourth act, that this alone might enſure ſucceſs. The fifth is full of action and energy, and it would not have coſt M. de Voltaire any great efforts to render this tragedy equal to his latter productions.

The verſification is excellent, the ſituations intereſting, and the interview, of the two rival brothers with Amelia, is a truly beautiful ſcence.

In 1765, the original piece, *Adelaide du Gueſclin*, was performed. Its fate was very different from what it had firſt experienced.

" It

" It was hiſſed, (that is, in 1734) ſays M. de " Voltaire, in the firſt act, and the hiſſing en- " creaſed in the ſecond, when the Duke de Ne- " mours entered, with his arm in a ſling. It was " ſtill worſe treated, when, in the fifth, the ſignal " appointed by the Duke de Vendome was heard, " and when the ſame Duke ſaid, at the conclu- " ſion, Art thou content Coucy? Several witty " perſons immediately echoed *Couſſi, Couſſi* *.

" You will eaſily imagine I was not obſtinate " after ſuch a reception. I had the ſame tragedy " acted four years afterwards, under the tile of " the Duc de Foix, but I rendered it much more " feeble, out of reſpect to the ridicule with which " it had been loaded. This piece, became now " much worſe, ſucceeded; and I entirely forgot " the original, which was ſo much its ſuperior.

" A copy, however, of Adelaide du Gueſclin " remained in the hands of the actors, and they " revived the play, without mentioning their in- " tentions to me. They performed it as it had " been preſented them, in 1734, without altering " a ſingle word, and it was received with the ut- " moſt applauſe. The very paſſages which had " been moſt hiſſed, were thoſe that were diſtin- " guiſhed by the loudeſt plaudits."

* Couſſi or Couci, ſignifies very la la, or very indifferent

XIX. L'ORPHELIN DE LA CHINE, acted, for the firſt time, in the ſummer of 1755, gave infinite pleaſure to every heart poſſeſſed of ſenſibility, or the love of virtue. The character of *Idamé* met with great applauſe. It is extremely intereſting, and was played in a very ſuperior ſtyle, by Mademoiſelle Clairon. The firſt act has great merit, nor is the ſecond at all inferior. It would have made a fine fourth act: perhaps the action is too much advanced in it, which makes the ſucceeding acts appear deficient. The denouement is the more excellent as the tragedy concludes without any effuſion of blood.

The performers ſpared no expence to repreſent this piece with every advantage in their power. The Coſtume of China was obſerved as much as poſſible. Mademoiſelle Clairon and Mademoiſelle Hus laid by their hoops, an alteration entirely approved by the beſt judges.

XX. TANCREDE, acted in 1760, was written, and the parts ſtudied, in two months. This piece was well contrived to diſplay ſtage decoration; but this advantage, according to the opinion of the author, ought to have been ſupported by greater animation in the ſtyle, leſs declamation, and verſification more poliſhed. M. de Voltaire has not rhimed in couplets, but at intervals, as in the

the Engliſh ode. This kind of poetry prevents uniformity of rhime, but the French thought it approached too near to proſe. Were rhimes artfully varied, they might greatly contribute to the harmony of the verſe, but this the author appears to have ſomewhat neglected.

M. de Voltaire has alſo been cenſured for employing ſeveral rhimes proſcribed by the laws of French poetry; but, in our opinion, he has given ſeveral very good reaſons to juſtify the liberty he has taken, in his *Tancrede* and his other tragedies. The following is the apology, contained in the letters on Oedipe, printed in 1719:

" It now remains for me to ſay ſomething in " defence of the rhimes I have hazarded in my " tragedy. I have made *frein* rhime with *rien*, " *heros* with *tombeaux*, *contagion* with *poiſon*, &c. " I do not defend theſe rhimes becauſe I have " uſed them, but I have admitted them becauſe " I believed them good. I cannot, with patience, " ſee every poetical beauty ſacrificed to the rich- " neſs of the rhime, and more care taken to " pleaſe the ear than to affect the heart, and in- " form the underſtanding. This tyranny has been " carried ſo far as to require rhimes for the eye " ſtill more than the ear. *Je ferois* and *J'aimerois* " do not differ in pronunciation from *traits* and " *attraits*: yet it is pretended theſe words do not rhime,

" rhime, becauſe cuſtom requires they ſhould be
" written with different letters. *M. Racine* had
" written, in his *Andromaque*,

M'en croirez-vous? Laſſé de ſes trompeurs attraits,
Au lieu de l'enlever, Seigneur, je la fuirois.

" However, as he could not vanquiſh his ſcru-
" ples, he ſtruck out the word *fuirois*, which ap-
" pears to me, if the ear only be conſulted, a
" much better rhime to *attraits* than *jamais*, which
" he ſubſtituted in its ſtead.

" The caprice of cuſtom, or rather of thoſe
" who have eſtabliſhed it, permits the word *ab-*
" *horre*, which has two r's, to rhime with *encore*,
" which has but one. By the ſame rule, *tonnerre*
" and *terre* ought to rhime with *pere* and *mere*;
" yet this is not allowed, and nevertheleſs no one
" murmurs at theſe unreaſonable reſtrictions.

" I cannot but believe it would be much for
" the advantage of French poetry to ſhake off
" the yoke of this abſurd and tyrannical cuſtom.
" To permit authors the uſe of new rhimes
" would be to furniſh them with new thoughts;
" for the ſlaviſh obſervance of rhime frequently
" permits but a ſingle word in the language to
" conclude the couplet. We can ſcarcely ever
" ſay what we intended to ſay, nor make uſe of
" the proper word; we are obliged to ſeek a
thought

" thought which may ſuit the rhime, ſince we
" have no rhime which can ſuit the thought.
" To this ſervile accuracy we are to impute the
" improprieties which ſo frequently offend us in
" the writings of our beſt poets. Authors are
" ſtill more ſenſible than their readers of the
" cruelty of ſuch a conſtraint, yet they dare not
" attempt to deliver themſelves from their
" bondage."

XXI. Olympie. This tragedy was firſt acted at the theatre of the Elector Palatine. It appeared a new ſpecies of compoſition, and ſeveral bold theatrical ſituations rendered the conduct of the piece highly intereſting, and moſt feelingly inſpired pity and terror. Every thing contributed to the horror of the denouement and cataſtrophe. Of all the death-blows ever dealt, on the tragic ſcene, none had appeared more affecting than that of Olympie. The decorations alſo were magnificent. The funeral pile, artfully diſpoſed, excited horror; the flames were real; the altar, on which Olympie was ſeen, gave a full view of this ſpectacle; the prieſts and prieſteſſes, arranged in a ſemicircle at a diſtance from her, left the Princeſs at full liberty to precipitate herſelf into the fire.

This tragedy produced the ſame effect at Paris when it was acted there in 1764. The learned favorably

favorably received a piece which revived in their memories the moſt auguſt and pleaſing ceremonies of antiquity. It was reſerved to M. de Voltaire, alone, to introduce, on the French ſtage, the rites of the ancient myſteries of paganiſm, with prieſts and prieſteſſes in their ancient habits, and all the apparatus of a funeral pile, exhibited in the denouement of the piece. The illuſtrious author was not without his fears that theſe novelties would be ill received in the capital. He ſuſpected it would be ſaid, " The ſcene of this tragedy is a convent, Statira is a nun, Caſſandra has made a general confeſſion. and the Hierophante is a religious director, &c." But the judicious part of the audience reſtrained the frothy and illiterate, while nothing was regarded but its numerous beauties. With what emotion they beheld, in the third act, Caſſandra ſhuddering while ſhe recollects Statira; in the fourth, Olympie at the foot of the altar, in deſpair at her weakneſs, and repulſing Caſſandra, who throws herſelf on her knees before her; and, laſtly, in the fifth, the ſame Olympie throwing herſelf into the funeral pile, in ſight of her terrified lovers, and of the prieſts, overwhelmed with grief and diſtraction. Theſe ſituations, it is true, have not the ſame effect in the peruſal, but tragedies are intended to be acted on the ſtage, and M. de Voltaire deſerves our thanks

thanks for the pomp and decorations he has introduced into our theatres.

XXII. ADELAIDE DU GUESCLIN, 1765. Though we have already mentioned this piece, under the article of the *Duc de Foix*, we think it proper here to remark the differences between theſe two tragedies. The Duke de Foix is, here, the Duke de Vendome. Amelia is Adelaide, niece to the Conſtable du Gueſclin. Vamir is the Duke de Nemours. Liſois the Sieur de Coucy. Emar is Dangeſt, the confidant of Nemours: and the confidante is Taire in both. The ſubject of this tragedy is taken from the Hiſtory of Bretagne. Jean de Montfort IV or V, who lived about the year 1387, had commanded a gentleman to murder the Conſtable of Cliſſon, but was ſoon after ſeized with remorſe for his barbarous orders. Bavalan (for that was the name of the gentleman) foreſeeing the regret of the Prince, ſerved him better than he could have hoped, by not complying with his commands. The period of time is the reign of Charles VI. Adelaide du Gueſclin is ſuperior to the Duc de Foix; and the French names of the characters are more agreeable to the ear, and more conformable to the truth of hiſtory, than the names Emar and Vamir, which have a romantic ſound. The character of the Duke de

Vendome, to whom Nemours is priſoner, has a ferocity which the violence of his paſſion and exceſs of his jealouſy can ſcarcely enable us to ſupport. The ſecond ſcene of the third act, between Nemours and Adelaide, whom the former ſuſpects to be falſe, is in our opinion, the moſt excellent in the piece. In the third ſcene of the fifth act, a cannon is fired, as a ſignal to announce to the Duke de Vendome the death of his brother. This diſcharge of the cannon has a very good effect, but the event is too plainly foreſeen for it to excite any terror in the audience; for, when the Sieur de Coucy has received orders to aſſaſſinate Nemours, it is too diſtinctly perceived he will not obey thoſe orders. Adelaide was the laſt piece of M. de Voltaire which had an equivocal ſucceſs: for *les Scythes*, *les Pelopides*, and *les Loix de Minos*, were very indifferently received; and they even have not all been acted.

XXIII. That we might not interrupt our account of the tragedies of M. de Voltaire, we have not yet ſpoken of ſeveral of his comedies. NANINE, acted in 1749, is only the novel of Pamela verſified. The part of Nanine, and that of the Count, who is in love with her, are intereſting, but they might have been much more ſo. The Baroneſs de Lorme, to whom the Count had promiſed

miſed marriage, is one of thoſe characters which we ſee on the ſtage, but ſeldom any where elſe. Though, even for the ſtage, it is a character not very proper, ſince it is neither ſufficiently ridiculous nor ſufficiently odious to produce effect. Madame d'Olban, the mother of the Count, is a ſimple boaſting perſonage, intended to fill up the piece; her abſurdities are indeed too trivial, and unſuitable to her birth. The reſt are vallets, who have nothing particular, except Philippe Hombert, the father of Nanine, who only appears at the denouement, but who is well drawn.

The firſt act is very naturally conducted, it is truly comic, and abounds in brilliant maxims and ſtrong ſententious lines, though not always well introduced. The ſixth ſcene, between the Count and Nanine, is very affecting. The fifth of the ſecond act has equal merit, but is almoſt the only good one in that act. The reſt is frigid, ill conducted, and in an inferior ſtyle. An equivocal letter, as in Zaïre, where the words, "My dear father," have been omitted at the top of the page, produces all the perplexity of the piece. Who could have imagined that a letter from a daughter to her father, from a young girl to an aged ruſtic, could ever have been miſtaken for a billet doux. The author muſt have been very

hard put to it, to render the conduct of Nanine ſuſpected, when he made her write a letter in ſuch a ſtyle.

There are two excellent ſcenes in the third act, the ſecond and the fifth. The ſecond is equally comic and affecting. M. de Voltaire has hit the preciſe point requiſite to unite theſe two ſtyles, and form a third. This third, which has never been well executed in all its extent, does not conſiſt (as M. Clement remarks) in being able to diſtribute pleaſantries through one ſcene, and tears through another. That requires but little ingenuity, and is rather to disfigure than to unite; but to join in the ſame part the comic and the affecting, without weakening either, but, in reality, giving new ſtrength to both. This is indeed art, and ſhows the great maſter. The extreme difficulty of effecting this cannot but greatly heighten the pleaſure, from the ſurprize it produces; but how arduous the taſk to ſupport this double part through five, or even through three acts!

The fifth ſcene, that of the denouement, is pathetic, and well unravelled, if we except a few interruptions from Madame d'Olban. Philippe Hombert is known to be the father of Nanine, of whom he had been imagined the ſecret lover, her innocence can no longer be doubted, and the Count, undeceived, reſolves to ſacrifice the Baroneſs to his affection for Nanine.

Some

Some have objected that the moral of the piece is dangerous, and tends to confound the different ranks of ſociety, and produce unequal alliances. The amorous Count d'Olban advances, on this head, maxims equally contrary to the good order of a ſtate and the ſubordination of families. But it is a lover who ſpeaks thus; and we are leſs ſurprized at what he ſays, than at the facility with which the Counteſs, his mother, conſents to his marriage.

Some have been alſo offended at the Count d'Olban, when he takes away from his miſtreſs all the preſents ſhe had received, and deprives her of the genteel dreſs he had allotted her, to ſend her back to her own village in her original ruſtic attire. This behaviour has been cenſured as equally cruel and mean, and which we ſhould be ſorry to ſuppoſe poſſible in a man of quality.

XXIV. La Prude, a comedy never acted, but at the theatre at Sceaux, under the protection of the Ducheſs du Maine. I know not why it has never been performed by the comedians of Paris, ſince, as the Abbé de la Porte remarks, it would moſt probably produce a very good effect. It contains ſituations truly comic, artful, and delicate, more calculated to obtain the approbation of perſons of taſte than that of the multitude.

The

The characters are well ſuſtained, and properly diverſified. Thoſe of *Dorphiſe* and *Blanfort* are, perhaps, too cloſe imitations of thoſe of *Tartuffe* and *Orgon*, in *l'Impoſteur* of Moliere. We meet with the ſame love of virtue and probity, the ſame credulity and obſtinacy in Orgon and in Blanfort, and the ſame hypocriſy and villainy in Dorphiſe and in Tartuffe. The ſcene of the rendezvous, in which Blanfort diſcovers all the wickedneſs of his vile miſtreſs, is too common to the theatre. Thoſe detections, occaſioned by the obſcurity of night, have been ſo often repeated, on our ſtage, that they no longer give the ſame pleaſure to the audience. But what pleaſes, in this piece, are thoſe characters drawn from real life, and thoſe ſentiments which do honor to the abilities of M. de Voltaire, even in that kind of compoſition which ſeems leaſt adapted to his genius.

The ſtyle of La Prude reſembles that of Nanine, it is ingenious, but the verſification is negligent; there are in it a number of harſh, weak, and proſaic verſes, and ſome which are not French.

XXV. Le Caffé, or L'Ecossaise, a comedy, of five acts, in proſe, acted in 1760. It does not greatly abound in action, but, in recompence, contains a number of ſatirical ſtrokes, which are com-

commonly more nervous than delicate. The epigrams ſcattered through it contributed powerfully, without doubt, to the ſucceſs it met with, and which could not be greatly expected from peruſal. But the ſtyle breaths an elegant ſimplicity, and is intereſting and comic. *Lindane*, the heroine of the piece, is affecting to every mind of ſenſibility. Polly, the chamber-maid, is diverting, and the character of Freeport, though not new, is excellent. This comedy met with its critics, but the author broke the force of the attack by praiſing it exceſſively in the preface.

" The comedy of l'Ecoſſaiſe, ſays he, may be " pronounced one of thoſe works which are cal- " culated to ſucceed equally in all languages. " In it is to be found the ſimplicity and propriety " of the admirable Goldoni, with perhaps more " intrigue, ſtrength, and intereſt. The denoue- " ment, the character of the heroine, and that " of Freeport, reſemble nothing we have before " ſeen on the French ſtage. Yet are they drawn " from pure nature. This piece ſeems a little in " the ſtyle of the moſt eſteemed Engliſh ro- " mances. It abounds with ſimilar touches, and " like deſcriptions of manners. In it is nothing " far-fetched, no oſtentation of wit, from the author, " when the character alone ſhould be exhibited:

" nothing

" nothing foreign to the ſubject; none of that " ſcholaſtic parade, or thoſe trivial maxims which " ſo often ſupply the want of action. This, in " juſtice, we think ourſelves obliged to ſay of our " celebrated author.

" We confeſs, at the ſame time, that, in confor- " mity to the opinion of ſeveral judicious per- " ſons, we think the part of Frelon might be re- " trenched. He appears in the laſt acts, and is " puniſhed, as is reaſonable, at the end of the piece; " but this juſtice ſeems, in ſome meaſure, to cool " the attention then naturally directed to the de- " nouement.

" Beſides, the character of Frelon is ſo mean " and odious that we would wiſh to ſpare the " reader the two frequent view of ſuch an object, " more diſguſting than comic; though we muſt " allow it is to be found in Nature."

It is difficult to admit the truth of this, taking the character ſuch as it is deſcribed by the author of l'Ecoſſaiſe. His Frelon is an impudent raſcal, ſuch as certainly is not to be found among our men of literature.

XXVI. Le Droit du Seigneur, a comedy, acted in 1762, had not ſuch brilliant ſucceſs as l'Ecoſſaiſe, though in ſeveral particulars this is the beſt piece. The language is indeed very negligent.

negligent. It contains verſes in which both the pauſe and the rhime are wholly violated, but it alſo has paſſages extremely pathetic and elegant. The Marquis du Carrage is an accompliſhed philoſopher, who abounds in the moſt noble ſentiments, and gives additional force to his doctrine by his example. The other characters are to be found in other comedies or romances; but the author has had the art to make them appear new, by a variety of excellent thoughts, ſcattered through their parts, by eaſy and elegant dialogue, and by the ſentiments they deliver. Theſe latter may, perhaps, be too numerous; but a defect ſo agreeable is eaſily excuſed.

XXVII. La Femme qui a Raison. A piece acted at the theatre of Carouge, near Geneva, in 1758, but which has never been performed at Paris. As the author has not admitted it into the collection of his dramatic pieces, an honor of which, indeed, it was not worthy, we ſhall here give a brief account of the plot. Madame Duru, a lady of faſhion, married to a citizen of that name, by whom ſhe has two children, a ſon and daughter, takes advantage of the abſence of her huſband, who is increaſing his fortune in India, to alter her ſtyle of living to a manner more ſuitable to her opulence. The Marquis d'Outremont con-

conceives a paſſion for her daughter, and ſhe is deſirous to ſee them united, but waits the conſent of her father. A correſpondent of the huſband's, who enjoys the confidence of M. Duru, on the other hand, wiſhes his daughter to marry the ſon of Duru; and Philpot, his ſon, the daughter. During this conteſt, of marriages propoſed and rejected, M. Duru arrives from India; and, ſtill a thorough tradeſman in his manners, ſcarcely knows his own family, in the midſt of ſo much politeneſs and ſplendor. After having indulged a little in his parſimonious humor, Madame Duru convinces him of the uſe which reaſon requires we ſhould make of our wealth, and proves herſelf *La Femme qui a raiſon;* or, a Wife in the right.

XXVIII. It now only remains to ſpeak of M. de Voltaire's lyric poetry, which was not that in which he moſt excelled, as he himſelf has confeſſed.

The public was nearly of the ſame opinion on the appearance of his Sampſon and Pandore. [One of theſe was ſet to muſic by Rameau, and one of our ableſt muſicians is, it is ſaid, now reſetting the other. " Pandore, (ſays M. de Vol-
" taire, in a letter to a friend) is not a well writ-
" ten, but it may be made a ſplendid entertain-
" ment, and is not ill adapted to muſic. It is
" full

" full of duos, trios, and choruſſes. It is, be-
" ſides, a philoſophical opera, which ought to be
" acted in the preſence of Bayle and Diderot. It
" treats of the origin of moral and phyſical evil.
" Jupiter, indeed, has no very commendable
" part: he wants nothing but his two tons. An
" indifferent muſician, named Royer, has com-
" poſed almoſt all the muſic of this whimſical
" piece." Pandore died with him, and we now wait its reſurrection; ſome critics believe this impoſſible, but they, perhaps, are too faſtidious.

SKETCH

SKETCH

OF THE

CHARACTER

OF

M. DE VOLTAIRE,

CONSIDERED AS A

DRAMATIC POET.

M. DE VOLTAIRE very early perceived the beauties and defects of our tragic ſcene. Corneille, an ancient Roman among the French, a noble, rapid and profound genius, appeared to him full of the moſt barbarous irregularities. Racine, more elegant and tender, was frequently deficient in ſtrength and Intereſt. Crebillon had opened to himſelf a new path, by that tragic terror which marks his compoſitions; but he ſtaggered at every ſtep when the ſubject did not accord with his particular genius. M. de Voltaire, who had the gift of good taſte, a ductile mind, enlightened by philoſophy, and a feeling heart, imagined the public favor could only be enſured by uniting

uniting the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtics of thoſe three great maſters of the French ſtage. He determined to think like Corneille, write like Racine, and ſhake the ſoul like Crebillon. This project was worthy the Alexander of literature. He may not always have been equal to ſo vaſt a deſign, but it muſt be confeſſed he has often ſucceeded; and ſucceeded ſo well that his beſt pieces (Zaïre and Alzire for example) have drawn more numerous audiences than any of the works of our greateſt tragic poets. "He does not merely pleaſe (ſays a certain writer) he enchants."

But whence ariſes this indeſcribable charm? From his brilliant deſcriptions, his noble ſentiments, and bold, nervous, and ſublime thoughts. Such is the character of the ſtyle of M. de Voltaire, than which none can be better adapted to tragedy. What ſweetneſs, what elegance, what harmony, what colouring! It muſt appear ſurpriſing that the luſtre of his imagination ſhould not enfeeble the pathos, to be found in all his pieces. He is tender and affecting, yet not the leſs elegant or leſs ingenious; he, at once, touches the heart and delights the underſtanding. Thoſe who have taſte enough to reliſh his exquiſite beauties will be tempted to agree with us, in readily allowing him genius, which ſo many critics have denied him to poſſeſs; for he unites

the

the brilliant and the pathetic; he feels and he reflects; and it is that combination, as a certain philoſopher has obſerved, which conſtitutes the man of genius. One eulogium cannot be refuſed M. de Voltaire, and is, perhaps, excluſively his own; which is, that if his verſes be diveſted of their meaſure, we ſhall ſtill find a nervous and elegant proſe: make the ſame experiment on other tragic poets, and ſome will appear barbarous, and others languid.

Though this praiſe has been allowed to the poetry and proſe of M. de Voltaire, he has been cenſured for too much neglecting the analogy of his ideas, and that imperceptible connexion, which, by artfully uniting the different parts of a work, renders its peruſal delightful. It has been objected that almoſt all his verſes, disjoined and detached, preſent themſelves, as it were, one by one. But it ſeems ſcarcely poſſible to do otherwiſe, when we wiſh to write lofty and ſonorous verſes, eſpecially in the French language; a language embarraſſed with articles, incapable of inflexions, poor in poetical terms and nervous expreſſions, ſubjected to the eternal monotony of rhime, and yet affording no rhimes ſuitable to ſublime ſubjects.

Thoſe, therefore, who would give ſtrength to our proſaic and monotonous poetry are under an indiſ-

indiſpenſable neceſſity of writing in ſingle lines, or couplets. M. de Voltaire has perceived this, and repaired the fault, if it be one, by endeavoring to intermix long and ſhort periods, by varying the meaſure, avoiding common expreſſions, too frequent conjunctions, repetitions of the ſame word, and, above all, rhiming on epithets.

Other critics have denied our poet the talent of invention. They have declared him incapable of forming a connected whole, and that, poſſeſſing no originality, he is only able to poliſh and decorate ſubjects which have been attempted before by others. But, if theſe attempts have failed, why ſhould it be forbidden a writer, of genius, to treat them in a ſuperior manner? Beſides, there are tragedies which are entirely his own, Alzire for example; and theſe have not been the pieces received leaſt favorably by the public.

It has alſo been pretended that M. de Voltaire, in order to enſure ſucceſs to his theatrical productions, has made uſe of means never thought of by the great poets of the laſt age. Had he a piece, it has been ſaid, to appear on the ſtage, he ſupported it with more artifice and induſtry than if the object in view were to prevent the fall of an empire. But in what cabals could he engage after his retirement to Fernei? And, ſince that time, the worſt things he has written have been

been acted, and received with the moſt flattering applauſe. The man who has written *Zaïre*, *Alzire*, and *Merope*, need never deſcend to intrigue and degrading artifice. He who poſſeſſes the genius of Racine wants not the craft of Scuderi.

THE END.

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